

# HOME DEPARTMENT MAGAZINE



JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER  
1929

# Home Department Magazine

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### MARK YOUR RECORD EVERY WEEK IN THE BLANKS BELOW

Record of \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter

#### HOME DEPARTMENT of Sunday School of \_\_\_\_\_

Visitor \_\_\_\_\_

Month of \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Sundays \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson for this Sunday Studied \_\_\_\_\_

Attended Sunday School Today \_\_\_\_\_

Offering Inclosed, cents \_\_\_\_\_

You have agreed to study the Sunday school lesson for half an hour each week. The other items are voluntary. Please mark this record each week, and have it ready for the Visitor, who will call at the end of each quarter.

Quarterly Total: Lessons Studied \_\_\_\_\_ Time present in Sunday school \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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# Home Department Magazine

HIGHT C. MOORE, Editor

July, August, September, 1929

## The Dahlia

BY CRISTEL HASTINGS

A twisted bulb, fantastic-shaped, and gnarled  
Beyond all semblance of a living thing,  
Held bacchanalia with a garden spade  
While waiting for the magic touch of Spring.

A robin paused to sling a lilting note,  
Then blithely fluttered on to azure skies,  
But a blossom, deep-imprisoned in the bulb,  
Had heard the song and opened sleepy eyes.

And lo, the magic fairy wand of Spring  
Performed the miracle of groping roots,  
A promise of a glory like the sun,  
Of tiny sprouts, of leaves, and tender shoots.

Its emerald head was lifted to the sun,  
It soon outgrew the fragrant mignonette,  
A velvet pansy bed was lost below,  
Forgotten was the modest violet.

But one tall stem stood swaying in the wind,  
And cast a slender shadow like a tree;  
The fairies came at dusk with brush and paint  
And made of it a wondrous thing to see.

At dawn, a crimson flower, wet with dew,  
Shone proudly in a garden, like a gem—  
'Twas the dahlia, born of bulbs and robin's  
SONG—  
All the glory of a sunset on one stem.

## Open Spaces and Bird Lore

BY FRANCES M. MORGAN



HE most satisfying feature of country life, perhaps, at least, to lovers of the untamed, is the opportunity it offers for bird study and the privilege of making friends with the feathered folk—those pretty creatures who dwell in the hedges and tree-tops, who give us the sweetest music imaginable and who kill the insects that are harmful to our crops, yet ask nothing in return.

In the city parks, where, unfortunately, many people are forced to carry on their only and, one must say, very meager study of bird lore, the poor, exiled things, pecking half-heartedly at scattered crumbs seem conscious of the knowledge that an unkind fate is defrauding them of their very own birthright—the freedom and bounty of the woods and open fields.

To the genuine lover of wild life, the city bird is one of the saddest sights his eye beholds. Every little forlorn chirp holds a note of distinct homesickness, to his ears. Even the chattering black-

birds, in spite of their air of jaunty rakishness, you, yourself will notice, undeniably have the look of creatures making the best of a bad situation. The wood thrush, though sometimes seen, rarely treats the park frequenter to even the "whisp" of a song—yet think of the magnificent heights to which he can rise, this modest chorister with spotted vestments, when inspired by meadows, little rivers and blue, blue skies!

Thousands of city-bred men and women live and die without ever having heard the golden notes of a thrush, mocking bird or other songster. Pathetic, crippled Jenny Wren, of Dickens' story, born and "reared" in Limehouse, never heard a real bird song. In exalted moments she smelled the incense of never seen blossoms—heard the carols of birds upon which her bright, wise eyes had never rested. The models of Dickens were flesh and blood folk of the London slums, as all know.

It is a sad truth that to many the sparrow represents all that stands for

bird life. And yet—even these noisy gamins, classed with us as “undesirables,” undoubtedly have their reason for being. They seem to fit very nicely into their grimy city environment having to a marked degree the talent for adaptability. God never fashions a creature and puts it upon earth that has not its own purpose and duty to perform, somewhere, some time, in his great plan.

The despised, humble English sparrow perhaps fills his destined niche when he furnishes a “smidgen” of bird information to city folk—who knows?

Think of country people! They open their eyes while the birds are busy with their matins. The fieldlark’s call welcomes them from the pastures and they start for work or play. Then, at dusk, when the big, “bumbly” moths lose their way in the drenched grasses, when homecoming sheep tinkle, tinkle their elfin bells from “over the hills and far away,” then the treat is theirs to hear the quaintest, most fascinating song, or call, of birddom—“Whip-poor-Will; whip-poor-Will—whip-poor-Will!”

One of the chief raptures of a genuine boy’s life is the finding of a nest filled with wonderful, fragile eggs. Ask thousands of staid business men about it. They’ll forget their cluttered desks at once and begin the story about the day the first nest was discovered. It snuggled in the pasture grass and held a treasure rarer than the jewels of royalty. Like pearls with a fleck of brown upon them they rested in a casket that no human cabinetmaker could devise or assemble. And a spotted calf is not in the same class with a spotted bird egg when it comes to beauty! Most any boy will vouch for the truth of this statement.

Like the fresh leaves of a new book, the summer lies ahead of us bringing its hundreds of beautiful adventures; the adventures of early morning, when the birds begin to cheep—the sleepy, lazy adventures to be found on the quiet, slow-moving river in the heat of noon—the quiet, doorstep adventures of the dusk when the crickets tune their violins, then pause to listen to their own shrill music—when the bird’s muffled

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voices sound from the eaves as they “talk in their sleep.”

Summer holds many pleasures, many wonderful lessons, treasure troves of uncounted variety. One of its best gifts is the opportunity granted to most of us, to live a closer life with our faithful friends, the birds.

## The Family Book

BY LYDIA LION ROBERTS

“What a big blank book,” said Aunt May as she picked up a book from the library table.

“That is our new family record book,” explained Mrs. Gray. “There are always interesting things happening in a busy family of seven like ours, and it seemed too bad not to keep some sort of a record for us all to enjoy and look back upon. Ruth suggested this big book, and each week every one in the family writes something in it, or pastes in an interesting clipping of the news.”

“That’s a good idea,” agreed Aunt May, “and I must sit down and read it right away. Here is a short account of John’s class track meet, where John won a ribbon, and a drawing of Bert’s, and Dorothy has pasted in part of a letter from her cousin in Alaska.”

“Even five-year-old Peggy wrote her name in our book,” pointed Mrs. Gray, “and this week she is trying to learn to write her address so as to put it in the book. Did you see the picture of the school orchestra with Lester and his violin? Here is the account of the first snowstorm, and a picture of the drifts around our piazza.”

“I suppose you will keep this up every year,” mused Aunt May, “and it will settle many a dispute as to when events happened, besides being one more thing to unite the family in jolly, pleasant ways of daily living.”

## Life’s Little Day

Morning and toil to test our strength,  
Noonday, a shadow’s lessening length,  
Twilight, remembrance and rest,—  
Midnight, a distant starry quest!

—John Richard Moreland.

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## Mrs. Osborne’s Substitutes

BY JOSEPHINE E. TOAL



SPIRIT of pessimism pervaded the missionary meeting in the church parlors that hot August afternoon.

“I don’t see any use in trying to put over that Bible woman proposition, now that Mrs. Osborne is gone.” Mrs. Kenny fanned her pink, perspiring face with her handkerchief and slumped disconsolately in her chair.

“Nor I, Lou,” nervous little Mrs. Allbright added emphatic assent. “Mrs. Osborne was the only one of us that could go ahead with those quota-raising schemes.”

“For my part I don’t see how we are going to do anything without her. She always knew just what to do and how to do it. Don’t you think, Mrs. Hunting, we would better cut our activities down next year—down to something—you know—well, something that we less capable women can handle?” Hesitantly but with half-defiant protest Mrs. Porter appealed to the minister’s wife.

Mrs. Hunting did not at once reply. When she spoke it was thoughtfully and with a sympathetic glance round the circle of faces: “I wonder just why Mrs. Osborne was so efficient. In what did she have the advantage of the rest of us? She hadn’t the literary ability of Mrs. Evans here but she could always be depended upon to take the part of the text-book assigned her, and somehow she could get it before us in a way that did us good. She had not Mrs. Brown’s musical talent and we never thought of asking her for a solo, but she could always be relied upon to conduct the devotional service. Don’t you think her efficiency in all undertakings lay largely in her willingness to do the best she could?”

Several heads bowed assent.

“I never knew Mrs. Osborne to be late,” spoke up eagerly Mrs. Brown. “She never kept a program waiting.”

“She kept an eye out at every meeting for strangers.”

“She brought in five new members this year.”

“Mrs. Osborne never got discouraged and gave up a thing.”

“Nor got offended on a committee.”

The minister’s wife smiled appreciatively at each speaker. “Perhaps no one of us can exactly fill Mrs. Osborne’s place,” she went on, “but if each of us would try to substitute for her in one certain thing we might not have to worry about putting over the programs she would make possible.”

“I see what you mean, Mrs. Hunting.” It was Mary Goodrich’s voice that broke the silence. “I am willing to pledge myself to get five new members next year.”

There was a general straightening up of drooping shoulders.

“I will try to be Mrs. Osborne in promptness,” declared Mrs. Brown. “I believe I have been late three times out of four this year, but I will turn over a new leaf and be in my place on the stroke of the clock even if I have to leave my dinner dishes in the sink.”

A burst of hand-clapping greeted this speech, for the immaculateness of Mrs. Brown’s kitchen was proverbial and she was wedded to tidiness.

“I don’t know anything I can do that would resemble Mrs. Osborne in the least,” ventured Mrs. Bacon, “but I will try to look after newcomers to the best of my ability.”

“So will I,” “And I,” “And I,” came in quick succession.

“I know I am far too sensitive. But from now on I will try to take all the slights you have for me,” laughed pretty Mrs. Canton, “without getting peeved.”

Mrs. Hunting thought they would all do well to second Mrs. Canton’s resolution. She confessed that Mrs. Osborne had been an inspiration to her in her ability to keep sweet whatever the outlook.

Then followed another silence until Margaret Hope rose, flushed and trem-

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bling, and committed herself to the promise to conduct devotional service when asked.

The eyes of more than one woman present blurred, for they knew something of what it cost the timid girl to make her decision.

Hardly was Margaret seated when Mrs. Kenny got to her feet. "I—I want to do my part," she stammered. "If Mrs. Allbright will help me I will take up the task of raising the Bible woman fund."

"Yes, I am with you," Mrs. Allbright agreed, "provided the rest of the members will back us and will also pray for us that 'our faith fail not.'" And there were earnest responses in assent.

And that is how it came about that the Millville missionary society made all its goals the next year and reached an efficiency record never before attained.

## Homes or Filling Stations—Which?

By J. W. ATTEBERRY

A few months ago Mrs. Thomas Kilbride, president of the Illinois Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, made the statement that "the modern home is little more than a filling station." In commenting on the statement made by this leading educator, the editor of a Pacific Coast daily says: "The world is on wheels and home has become but a filling station. It is where we stop between spins to refill our stomachs before we rush off to other ambitions.

"Once home was the library where we sat down through the long winter evenings and visited with our great friends of the past. We filled our minds. Now we fill our stomachs. The road map is our study today.

"Home," as he says, "was once the place where the family gathered about and had games and social life." He regrets the fact that much of the exchange in these days consists of driving from the back seat.

Home, as this editor sees it, is scarcely a roosting place, for he says that

many of us buy a tent and pitch it under the stars, sleeping in this way between two suns.

He likens a car to a shuttle by means of which we fly from one place to another, and regrets the fact that we are not weaving any very striking pattern to show for all our efforts.

The effects of this plan of converting our modern homes into "filling stations," as this editor says, remain to be seen. He thinks that some of the things we are seeing are the results and about all we will get out of it will be the remains.

It would not be quite so bad if our homes were first-class "filling stations" so far as the supply of food is concerned, but too often in our haste we disregard the rules of such "filling stations" and so must suffer the consequences. The editor pictures how we gulp down a bowl of soup and take a cracker on the run. Such conditions are not conducive to health while at the same time we are deprived of the needful social and spiritual privileges.

In the face of all that has been said it is gratifying to find that there are still many homes that are more than "filling stations," for they are seeking to provide a wholesome religious atmosphere in which the lives of the members of the home can have the finest opportunity for development. In such homes as these the children gather in a social circle when the day's work is done and spend the evening reading, playing games or in profitable conversation. Not long ago a day school teacher was a guest in a country home, and while this home was on a highway it was far more than a "filling station," for the family altar was still in good repair and the members of the home gathered about it every evening. It is homes of this character from which are coming the young men and women who will one day become leaders in their chosen professions.

So while filling stations for automobiles are multiplying all the while, let us see to it as members of the Home Department that our home does not sink to the level of such a station, but that it is made a social and spiritual center where the children delight to congregate when the work of the day is done.

## The Picnic at Clear Springs

By FRANK STRICKLAND



OME children might not have been as agreeable and uncomplaining about it as were Bob and Betty and Dot and Nell and Ted. But these five, from fifteen-year-old Bob down to five-year-old Ted, were always beautifully open to reason. Besides, their love for their mother and their compliance with the wishes of their father, not infrequently took the unselfish turn.

Even when Mrs. Fondsworth's health had been much better than it now was, all the children remembered with pain how hard she had worked preparing the picnic dinner. The Sunday school always had its annual picnic in June, and it seemed to the children that the day on which their mother prepared the dinner, baked the ham and chicken and cakes and custards, was always the hottest day of the month. But quietly, patiently, sometimes even humming softly, Mrs. Fondsworth would stand all day over the hot range, the perspiration standing out on her tired forehead. Even Ted, the youngest, was conscious of feeling sorry for his mother.

But how all five of the children did enjoy the annual Sunday school picnic! Mrs. Fondsworth fully realized the amount of pleasure and recreation it afforded the children, and when, this summer, she faced the stubborn fact that she simply dare not undergo the ordeal of preparing the picnic dinner, her disappointment for the children was keener than their own would be.

"It's all right, Mother," said Mr. Fondsworth one night at the supper table when his wife had ventured to mention the matter in the presence of the entire family. "We kids all understand it." He always included himself as one of the children when in their company. "We'll miss the picnic of course, but we know you aren't well, and we wouldn't ask it of you, would we, children?"

All but Ted agreed that Dad was right and they didn't mind.

"But I want to go," Ted remonstrated.

But Dad soon helped Ted to see the sense and kindness of the sacrifice.

There was keenest disappointment among all the comrades of the Fondsworth children when it was learned they weren't going. "Come right on with us," they said. "It won't be a picnic at all without you." But none of the five children felt quite free to accept such an invitation. Mrs. Fondsworth was aware of the disappointment of their chums, as well as of that of her children, brave and agreeable though they were. And the day before the picnic, with the slightly quiet, subdued manner of the children, and with some friend coming in every few minutes, expressing such sincere regret that the children weren't going, she could not help wondering if after all she had not been selfish.

The picnic was to be held at Clear Springs, a little place some thirty miles from the city. The Sunday school was large and a train had been chartered. The picnic had been held at the little place before, and the children loved it. Mrs. Fondsworth thought of the cool freshness, the openness of the place; of the beautiful crystal spring; the quiet restfulness of it all; and were it not for the terrible exertion of preparing that dinner, she knew she would enjoy the outing, and that it would be beneficial.

On the morning of the picnic, even before any of her own children were awake, Mrs. Fondsworth could hear sounds of innocent gladness and childish hilarity from the neighboring houses. It was too much, too much!

"What is it, Mother?" Was she sobbing as loudly as that? Had she wakened Mr. Fondsworth?

"Nothing much, I guess," the woman managed to say.

"Are you ill?" the husband inquired.

"No, no, but I'm just so sorry now at the last minute that I didn't arrange for the children to go to the picnic."



"Do you want to go yourself?"  
"I want to go mostly for the children. It would really do me good, if it weren't that I didn't prepare the —"  
"Oh, don't worry about the dinner," said the husband, jumping out of bed. "Will you go yourself?"  
"What would the children do for something to eat all day? We can't sponge on the other people out there."  
"That's all right about the dinner. Go ahead and dress, and I'll get the kids up. Never mind about the dinner; just do as I ask you."

"But—but—" she hesitated.  
"But nothing," Mr. Fondsworth said, playfully. "Hurry and dress. You don't want us kids to go and leave you, do you? Get up, kids, quick; we're going to the picnic!"

He laughingly remarked that he could write poetry without half trying. He said he was going into the kitchen and see if the coffee he made was as good as the rhymes he made.

It occupied but a short time for the children to dress, and soon breakfast was eaten. The children were delighted that their mother was going, but, like their mother, they were puzzled to know where dinner was coming from. All the information they could get from Mr. Fondsworth was that the doctors had decided that an occasional fast was beneficial.

"And we're not going to get any dinner?" Ted asked, almost whimpering. "It won't be a picnic if we don't eat."

But everybody knew Dad well enough to know that, whatever his scheme was, he was not going to subject them to any serious unpleasantness. It wasn't any great distance to the train, and there was yet ample time to walk. Just before they reached the depot Mr. Fondsworth bade them all wait a moment while he went into a filling station to speak to a friend. He was gone but a minute, and when he came out, what should he be doing but almost struggling with a great big market basket? It must have been amply filled, judging by the way Dad puffed and blew.

"Ted," Mr. Fondsworth said, laughing, "I guess it will be a picnic, for we

certainly are going to eat."

Everybody was mystified. "I didn't know you could buy things to eat at a filling station," one of the children said.

"What sort of trick is this you're playing on us?" asked Mrs. Fondsworth. "Just this," said Mr. Fondsworth.

"Having known you for sixteen years, and having loved you more and more every day of those years, I knew right well that if these five healthy angels of ours didn't get to go to that picnic, you would blame yourself for it forever and a day. I know your dear heart well enough that, last night I knew right well what your attitude would be this morning. I knew how utterly unhappy and self-reproachful you would have been all day today and all the days if the children hadn't had this outing. So I proceeded to the grocer's and I purchased canned goods—lots of canned goods—even a can-opener. Then I went to the baker's and I invested in pies—all sorts and kinds and shapes and sizes of pies. Yes, and cakes—big cakes, little cakes, round cakes, pound cakes. In fact, might as well admit it; I take the cake."

"Save me some of it," urged Ted.  
Mrs. Fondsworth said it was the best picnic dinner she ever ate, because it was such a happy surprise, and because she had no hand in the cooking of it.

## The Gift of Green

By ANNIE ALLISON

I thank thee, Lord, for restful green  
Which clothes the grass and vine and tree;  
Which gives the humming-bird its sheen,  
The sparkle to the sea.  
For the tall, stately, awaying pines  
Which spread their branches to the sky;  
For cool festoons of ivy vines  
Climbing the steeples, high;  
The shaded, mossy, woodland way,  
Restful and cool for weary feet;  
For trumpet-vines on fences, grey,  
For tall fir-balsams, sweet;  
For Norway maples' grateful shade,  
Or massy lindens, spreading wide;  
For every slender, grassy blade  
Clothing the country-side;  
For fields of clover in the sun;  
For rivers flowing to the sea;  
I thank thee, Lord, for every one  
Of these good gifts from thee.

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## The Golden Wedding

By WILLAMETTA PRESTON



Did you know Deacon Harper and wife have their golden anniversary next week? Can we not do something to brighten it?" Mrs. Dana, "Lookout for the Home Department" was talking with Mrs. Durand by phone.

"What can we do? They are as proud as they are poor—since Rob went away. I am willing to do anything possible—but you must plan it."

Mrs. Dana had begun her plans long weeks ahead. She knew the date—there had been a double wedding, in that long ago. She would keep her anniversary with her beloved in the spirit—but these others must be rejoiced with. Life had been hard for them, death had taken all but Rob and he had left them. They were poor, lonely. This was the one opportunity when outsiders could enter without intrusion.

They would give a surprise party. Of course they would bring their own refreshments. Of course they could bring a golden offering, as many half eagles as they could collect.

Mrs. Durand would carry out Mrs. Dana's plans to the letter. The town was already districted for their own church work—but this to be not the church only, but the town. The leader of each district was to go to each house with a special invitation, and with the notice of the golden love gift that would make the day even more memorable. All wanted to help with the giving. The children brought their pennies; older folks gave from a quarter to a gold piece.

Then the money was changed into gold at the bank and Mrs. Dana was almost ready—but one thing was lacking, a letter which seemed strangely delayed.

Upon the morning of that golden wedding day Mrs. Harper was strangely depressed. If only Rob was home. If only they had some one to rejoice with them. Mrs. Dana was the only one who would be likely to remember the day—but she would not call her and so re-

mind her that her anniversary could not be kept.

"We will keep it in our hearts, dear." Deacon Harper had his arms about her when a long line of teams came into the yard. It was so long they could not see the end far down the road.

"What does it mean?" asked Mrs. Harper: "We're not ready for company."

"The house is always like a new pin," reassured her husband. "If it is a surprise party, they have brought the eats with them."

While the men were finding places to tie their horses or park their cars, the women were flocking about the "bridal couple" with warm congratulations. Some of the girls were trimming the rooms with greens, putting flowers everywhere—and there was a large flower bell with the two dates.

And still they came, friends and neighbors, church people and townspeople until the little house was filled and there were groups upon the lawn.

The tables must be set upon the lawn. The house would not begin to hold them all. They had brought over the long folding tables from the church. These were spread with snowy linen—no paper cloths this day of days. From baskets came china and silver to supplement their small store. There was no lack of eatables—chicken pies in large milk pans, everything in like proportion.

Of course the bride and groom must sit at the head of the table. Mrs. Dana took her place next Mrs. Harper, quietly, as a matter of course. No one except these trusted friends knew that for her, also, it was an anniversary. It was not one to make merry over but to hold in sacred joy in her heart.

The pastor returned thanks, then everybody tried to talk at once. It was a happy, joyous hour they spent together. Then, while still about the table, the pastor rapped with his knife for attention and voiced for the company, the joy and congratulations of their townspeople for this golden anniversary.

Then little Margery Dana, all in pink, came dancing up to the aged couple and dropped into their laps gold pieces, so many no one could try to count.

"They are love-kisses-golden, love-kisses from us all," laughed the child. How could the aged couple but smile in return.

Before Margery could return to her seat a "flivver" dashed up to the yard—it could not come in. A young man sprang out.

"Thank God," exclaimed Mrs. Dana to herself—for it was Rob. He had come instead of writing.

"I lost connections else I'd have had breakfast with you," he exclaimed with an arm about each of his grandparents. "I was sure you'd be celebrating. But—I hadn't a thing to bring you—except—myself. I've come home to stay, Grandmother, Grandfather. If you want me half as much as I wanted to come—why—we're even."

It was the crowning joy of a perfect day. Rob had not found the fortune he had gone to seek but he had come back the same true, splendid fearless lad. He would make life worth the living—and the wonderful gift of their townspeople would banish fear of poverty forever away, for with this little nest egg to draw upon if needed, all the world was rosy.

"But best of everything is your presence, my friends," Deacon Harper remarked when called upon for a "speech." "The gift, the flowers, your coming here today show your thought of us. For this thought, this love we thank you. We felt as if we had about finished life's journey and longed to go. Now—we would like to stay here with you a bit longer, and shower you with love as you have us."

"And it was all your thought, I know it was, dear, generous friend." Mrs. Harper had her arms about Mrs. Dana. "It was your day, too."

"It is still my day. May not my beloved be keeping it with me, though we may not see him?"

*A hoary head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of righteousness.*  
—Proverbs.

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## Getting Rested at Home

By K. L. C.

Running into my neighbor's on an errand one evening just at supper-time, I caught a glimpse of the table festively lighted by tall candles.

"I beg your pardon, Hazel, for intruding," I said to the daughter who, napkin in hand, answered my ring. "I didn't know," with a glance tableward, "that you had guests."

"We haven't," she smiled, "just mother and dad and I are here." Then, as her eyes followed my glance, "Oh, the candles? We just light them for ourselves sometimes when the day has been monotonous. It kind of takes us out of our surroundings, you know."

I went home with a new idea stirring in my brain: the need of occasionally getting "out of one's surroundings," and the simple ways in which it may be accomplished. The picture of that attractive table, the little family chatting happily in the soft glow of the candle-light, held for me a lingering charm. Yet how simply escape from monotony had been achieved! A bit of snowy linen adorned with a dainty centerpiece—just a potted fern from the window-sill, the pot encased in pink paper to match the tall pink candles.

"Mother brought out grandma's old silver teapot," Hazel had explained, "and I put on my new pink tea-apron." Just a little play party, but it rested tired minds.

Into every household come gray days. Sometimes they are occasioned by nothing but monotonous routine. At other times wearisome toil renders us dull and spiritless. We all need to "get out of our surroundings" once in a while. But oftentimes—very often—we cannot just slip into our Sunday "duds" and catch the limited to Pleasure Port. Perhaps we cannot even climb into the old flivver and rattle over to the cross-roads grocery. Yet a little ingenuity might take us "out of our surroundings" even though we do not stir from the house.

Pleasant surprises are a real lubricating oil for domestic machinery. Try

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putting the family into good spirits by springing little "extras" on the drabbest days.

A friend gave me a recipe for a palatable Chinese dish. It suggested to me the idea of a surprise Chinese supper for the household coming in hungry from field and school. With rice as the basis for certain favorite dishes in our family, with tea served in my choice Oriental cups—tea well diluted for the little ones that they, too, might share in the novelty—and with odd little cakes and preserves for dessert, I made out an especially attractive menu. Chinese pictures cut from missionary and travel magazines and pasted on paper napkins suggested topics for conversation that brought out many questions for the children to look up at school. That their eager clamor for a "dainty Japanese tea, some day, mother," a "good old Norwegian coffee," a "German spread with wieners and—and—oh, pancakes, ma, do," proved that my novel-meal idea had met with favor with the youngsters at least.

Very trivial changes, easily rung in, will sometimes wonderfully brighten the dull day. Mother dressed in her best for the evening meal, flowers on the library table in flowerless months (bulbs grown in secret until in bloom will be a great surprise to the children), a plate of home-made candy uncovered when daddy picks up his paper, a new book to read aloud produced when lessons are over—little surprises like these reserved for the monotonous days help magically in "getting away from our surroundings."

## Vacation Memories

By CATHERINE NICHOLSON

*I remember—*

A mountain stream, swollen with the flood tides of a rainy spring, plunging abruptly over a fifty-foot drop in a glorious waterfall. It was like a tremendous wall of snowy soapbuds pouring ceaselessly into an enormous pool of feathery, boiling lather. Speechlessly we stared at it. The thundering of the waters enveloped us, and a light wind

dashed cool spray into our faces. Near the fall the spray was quite dense, so that here and there shimmering rainbows quivered an answer to the touch of the sweet June sunlight flashing through. Once a big, black-and-golden butterfly drifted lazily across the stream, almost against the herculean downward rush of waters, weaving in and out of the mists of spray with nonchalant grace. A water-fall, and a butterfly—what a contrast! And the same power created both.

*I remember—*

A rustic hotel built on a wooded hillside, floor and roof rising quaintly, like a series of stair-steps, as it ascended the slope. The spacious dining room was simply and quietly furnished, and so arranged that the center of interest lay in three magnificent spring landscapes—veritable symphonies of blue sky, green hills and valleys, and golden sunshine. Somehow the very sight of them brought winging into the mind all sorts of beautiful thoughts. Especially those words of David—"All the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens. . . . In his hands are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also . . ."

*I remember—*

A marvelously gay, brisk July rain—millions of polished, slanting, bronze lances driving swiftly earthward, but playfully melting away at the first touch. Following the rain came a fairy-tinted sunset of silver, blue, and rose, while mocking birds and cardinals flooded the orchard with rippling melody. Looking off across the pasture, west of the orchard, I could see a veritable ocean of daisies, pure-white with golden centers, faintly touched by the delicate sunset lights. The spicy perfume of wet tansy and dog fern, mingled with that of the shy, wild white-clover, eddied lightly on the air. All was very quiet and calm, as though the world had been mantled in unquestioning faith and trust.

Three memories of vacation—three precious pictures carefully hung upon the walls of the mind.

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## The Heart of Life

BY LAURA REID MONTGOMERY

**B**UT I thought we would take one of those smart, fold-up apartments near the lake. A doctor needs a good address and when we come back from our wedding trip—say, Will, I'd like to go to Niagara Falls. It is a bit old-fashioned to go there, but I'd love it. Wouldn't you?"

Will looked confused and embarrassed; he adored Wanda, but the pretty little milliner accustomed to making plenty of money with her store had a way of going ahead and making arrangements that rather staggered him. The question of cost did not appear to enter the curly, blonde head that set off the picture hats so adequately.

"You see, dear, those flats near the park are very expensive, and it would be so far from my patients that I would have to be away from home too much—"

"Will, surely you are not going to be stingy?"

"You shall have the spending of the money, Wanda, but I am not making a great deal yet."

"And yet you are so busy that you can scarcely ever get away to come down. Now, if you would come here to live you would have most of the village practice, for the old doctor wants to retire."

"That would be too easy a life. I am young and ought to do some of the hard work in the cities before stepping into a sinecure."

Wanda expostulated, but Will did not care to argue and merely became silent. The girls who had grown up with Wanda in the village were full of suggestions and plans for her future, and it irked her to be unable to speak largely of life in the city that seemed so full of fascinating possibilities.

Will had not been enthusiastic at the prospect of a honeymoon in Niagara Falls, and when the wedding day was only one month away he wrote and said the trip would be impossible both for lack of time and money.

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Wanda had just sold her millinery business and, hurt and indignant, she made use of her newly-acquired leisure to surprise Will in the city. He boarded with a village-friend who kept a boarding house in Chicago, and Wanda had a long wait before he came in tired from the intense heat.

He was plainly delighted to see her but had little to say concerning his inability to make money.

"You have lots of work. Why is it?"

He passed his hand wearily over his forehead and she noticed that he had grown much thinner during the summer. "I don't know, Wanda; you see I don't have time to think of money there is so much to do."

"I'd like to go around with you tomorrow, Will."

Wanda had never before been jealous but now the icy fingers of suspicion gripped her. Will seemed so absent and dreamy; he was too busy to visit her when she wanted him for special occasions like the Fireman's Supper and the Sorosis Dance. There must be some reason for all this, and where did his money go?

He agreed amiably if a bit listlessly to her proposal and hurried away to make a delayed call.

His mornings were spent in the hospital, but he promised to meet her at one o'clock for luncheon.

He came in a little late and she noticed that his hair had some threads of silver on the temples. "Shall we go to some smart place down town?"

"Better take a bite here. It is ready and I have a lot of calls to make," he replied, and she felt that the rather elaborate frock and new hat were entirely wasted in the dim diningroom in the basement of the boarding house.

They boarded a dusty street car and transferred on crowded corners where people were quite different from the well-dressed crowds that Wanda usually saw.

Before the afternoon was over Wanda was pale with fatigue and heart-sick

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with the poverty she had seen. Airless tenements crowded with babies, garbage cans that had long forgotten the use of covers to keep down the plague of flies. Mothers who bore the mark of the White Plague in tired eyes and too-red cheeks but who had no time for their symptoms, who only importuned the grave young doctor for hope for the baby. Several times Wanda saw the thin hand of her lover go unostentatiously into his pocket and heard the clink of silver when he put something on the table with no comment whatever. She began to have some idea where his money went and the reason why his collections did not seem an important thing to him.

He was due at the Free Dispensary at four o'clock, and she sank thankfully into a wooden chair and took off her hat. The first patient who hurried in from the crowded waiting room was a washwoman carrying a crippled child. Terrence had never walked, she explained, but now he had begun to suffer. Wanda watched with fascinated eyes as the man probed with skilled, nervous fingers and gentle words to the frightened child.

"He can be cured, Mrs. Jones," he said at last, "but no one can do it but Doctor Grave. He did some operations like that abroad. I will ask him to see Terrence at—" he consulted his engagement book and the mother interrupted.

"I wash every day except Sunday; would he come on Sunday?"

The look of passionate hope in the faded eyes made Wanda choke, and her glance down at the expensive silk frock made her suddenly realize the big things of life. No wonder Will had no time for the falls at Niagara.

"Don't fret about the time. I will come with the doctor whenever he can spare a few minutes and it won't matter whether you are home or not. If he thinks it advisable we may take him at once to the hospital without waiting for you. You trust me enough for that?"

"Trust." It was only one word. The woman looked from the child to the young doctor whose eyes held a divine sympathy as he gazed at the crooked

limbs that the marvels of surgery would restore to health.

There were many more cases in the hot, stuffy air, and at last there was one that caused the doctor to send Wanda to wait in the outer room.

"No, you cannot help and I don't want you to see what I shall dress; it is not good for you to come upon the suffering so quickly. I have become used to these sights," and he gently pushed the remonstrating girl into the waiting-room.

"Do you know the doctor well?" asked a thin-faced man with a cough.

She nodded mutely.

"He spends himself too much for us; he has grown old this summer," murmured the old man with an affectionate look at the closed door. "He never thinks of the office hours or of his meals. At all hours he is back of the yards helping us. One morning he stayed away from the hospital because old Mary said she couldn't die in peace unless he stayed and held her hand as she passed out—"

Wanda thought of the importance she had attached to their place of residence—residence when people were dying for lack of instruction in the decencies of life. She remembered the sharp letter she had written when he had failed to appear for the Fireman's Supper so that she was obliged to go without her escort.

"Will," she said as they sat in the street car on their way back to the boarding house, "I think we had better get a little flat over west so you won't have to take a car to the dispensary—"

His thin hand closed over hers in mute gratitude and his surprised eyes swept her face in a sudden adoration. After all his sweetheart understood the great pulsing heart of life that was so thinly overlaid by such things as fashions and cold conventions.

"And," she continued, her dreaming eyes on the teeming population gasping in the August twilight—at the steaming pavements, "I'm going to take that position as millinery-trimmer for a few months so we'll have some money on hand when we come across such pitiful cases. One feels so inadequate when of"

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fering only sympathy and I have decided not to have any foolish display at our wedding. Do you mind, dear?"

Will's reply would have surprised the village folks who had hinted that he was a laggard lover, and the woman at the boarding house wondered at the happy eyes that met her own as they sat down

to the prosaic table in the basement.

The boarders envied Will as Wanda sat dreaming when the dessert was finished. They did not know that the dark blue eyes were visualizing little Terrence remade and romping with his playmates.

## Leila's Intimate Friend

BY FLORENCE JONES HADLEY

**L**DLY leaning back in her rocker Sara Carlton looked with absent gaze into the distance. The bit of work that she had brought with her lay unheeded in her lap, while she just sat still, busy doing nothing, as Rob, her eldest son, often said.

Not usually was this the case, however, but this morning was different. This morning she had been brought out of her usual sense of peace, that all is well with the world, by something that had startled her beyond words.

She had heard of some girls—daughters of her close neighbors—who were bringing the hearts of their parents such a load of sorrow and shame as seemed to her unbearable. It couldn't be so—it just couldn't. Why, it was sinful to think such things could happen to her friends, in her own town.

As she had about decided this, she heard the sound of loud laughter, little shrieks from lips that sounded very natural, and in another minute a big car passed with a laughing crowd of young people in it. And yet it was scarcely a crowd—just two in the front seat, two in the back, sitting very close to each other, indeed, and they were tossing all sorts of badinage back and forth.

Well, that was all right, of course. Young folks must enjoy themselves, so why fuss so much about it? Just then, another car flew by, and in this were just two—a youth and a young girl. Well, that was all right, too. Dusk, after an unusually warm day, was a delightful time for riding. Yes, it was all right, yet—she never had been called

upon to decide whether it was all right or not. Someway she had been spared any questioning on the matter.

Leila, her oldest, seventeen next week, had never asked to take part in those wild rides. Why? Well, she was such a sensible, home-loving girl, and someway, she and her mother had always been such intimate—chums in every sense of the word.

To be sure, she never had thought of lecturing her daughter on the evils of the world outside, and yet she recalled several little intimate talks, heart-to-heart talks with no formality between, and she remembered, with a bit of wonderment, how the girl happened to agree so fully with her mother as they talked.

Just as she was pondering these things, from around the corner of the veranda came the sound of girlish voices, and then she remembered that Leila was entertaining several of her chums—Vera Allen, Ruth Harmon and Stella Rowson. What a good time young folks could have together, and she did not realize she gave a little sigh as she thought of all the things the youth of her day had missed.

"Did you see how May Howell tried to efface herself in the back of that car?" and Vera laughed. "You see, they were almost in sight of home, and mother might be watching, so safety first is May's motto." Again the light laugh.

"Well, doesn't her mother know where she is?" Leila's tone held a bit of surprise.

"Not so you would know it, my dear baby. No doubt May made her believe

she was over studying her Geometry with Ruth here. She is a cute one, believe me, is that same May."

"So that is how she gets away with it? Well, my guess is that Janie did not have to keep shy on account of her mother. Mrs. Benson doesn't care what Janie does or where she goes—says she wants her young folks to have a good time while they are young—never will be young but once." Stella explained the matter very casually indeed.

"That was Trudie and Ralph in that last car, you know, and I rather guess Miss Trudie had to spiel a bit before she got away. Very likely told her mother she was going with the girls for a ride, or to the Library or something else equally good. Mrs. Wentworth believes every word that Trudie says, so Trudie is in it, all right." And Ruth nodded her head as if the matter was settled for good.

There was nothing heard for a long minute but the creak of the swing in the corner of the vine-covered veranda. Then there was a little stir and Leila spoke.

"But I don't see how Trudie and May can deceive their mothers so. They have such faith in the girls, that I call it a—a—crime to take advantage of that faith." Her voice throbbled with feeling as she spoke.

"Oh, well, if their mothers are such easy marks, I don't know as the girls are to blame. You wouldn't do that, Leila?"

"No." That was all.

"Well, I guess you wouldn't. And I wouldn't either, for I never could get away with it, anyway," laughing lightly. "But those girls are such intimate friends that they stick together through everything. Why, Trudie and May are so intimate that I doubt there is one thing Trudie knows that May doesn't know, too. Well, I hope they can keep that way, but my experience is that intimate friends can deceive you, no matter how much faith you have in them." The girls all knew of the seemingly unbreakable intimacy that once existed between Vera and Jeannette Worley, and how, when it was ended, Jeannette

shamefully broke faith by giving the confidence that Vera had reposed in her to the world.

"Leila, you quiet little thing, what do you think about it? Do you believe in intimate friends? And who is your intimate friend? You see," smiling, "we none of us feel we have reached that place of trust with you. Have you an intimate friend? Who is she, anyway?"

Leila was silent a minute, then she answered briefly, "My mother, Stella."

Stella gasped. "Your mother? Why, Leila Carlton! Why, I never! You don't mean to say you tell your mother everything?"

"Why, yes. I have nothing to hide from mother, so why not talk things over with her? She understands girls, you see," simply in explanation.

Again the wondering gasp. "Well, I never! But if you had a really, truly secret, would you tell her? Honest, cross your heart?"

"I am sure I would, Stella, although I have no secrets so far that I would be afraid to share with mumsie. She is like a girl herself, you know."

Ruth spoke up very decidedly. "Well, that may be all right, now. But if you had a very important secret, would you dare tell her that? Wouldn't she scold you about it from morning till night, then follow you to bed for a good-night lecture?"

"My mother isn't like that." That was all.

"But if," and Vera asked as if to know for sure, "but if you should tell her something very, very important and make her promise never, never to tell, are you sure she wouldn't tell her most intimate friend? How could you be sure?"

"Because I know my mother, Vera. We are chums, and mother can enjoy my telling her of my good times just as well as if she were just a girl friend. I always talk over all my good times—and also my bad ones," smiling, "with my mother, and if I have made some mistakes, why, she tells me so in such a loving way, that does me more good than scolding would do. She is my best pal."

"Well," a bit doubtfully, "I think that



is lovely, but I would be afraid to tell my mother that way, she is so strict. Maybe she would be all right, but as it is now, I have no secrets to tell. Mother keeps us in hand, I can tell you, and so far it has been home for me—no car rides except with her and father or some of you girls. Can't fool that mother of mine, I can tell the world," her tone a bit complaining, yet with a note of pride in it also.

"Mine, too." Stella sat up as she emphasized that statement. "It's home for me, except when I run in to see you girls, or go with mother and father or brother Billy to some entertainment. I think sometimes I am pretty much abused, but I guess maybe it is all right. I just could not deceive my mother, anyway, for I could not look her in the eyes if I did. And Ruth here," pinching the hand that lay close to her own, "is in the same boat. My, her mother is a tyrant, just like mine. But anyway, girls, I have a hunch that they are right. I guess maybe it is all right that we are tied to our mother's apron strings, as May sneers sometimes."

A little after this the chatter ceased and the girls separated, and Leila sought her mother. Slipping her arm about the slender shoulders of her daughter, they chatted quietly for a while, the mother saying nothing of the conversation she had overheard. But when she sought her room a little later, all her prayer was, "Father, I thank thee."

## Censorship

BY FRANCES M. LIPP

My doors are shut to these,  
They may not enter in,  
Gossipers, idlers, maligners,  
Mourners for what-has-been.

My doors are ever open  
To those who bring laughter and light,  
Honest enjoyment from wearing toil,  
An eager desire for the right.

For these doors lead to the House-of-My-Heart,  
And whatever passes through,  
Becomes of my House a part,  
So I censor all—wouldn't you?

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## A Dirty Backyard or a Beautiful Garden

BY SARAH N. MCCREERY

Mrs. Maddox complained bitterly of the uninteresting scenery as the automobile sped along the way. It was true the scenery was not inspiring that day, the towns were far apart while the homes along the road were very few in number, but it was the first time such a thing had happened since the trip had begun ten days before. The automobile turned a corner and suddenly a little vine-covered cottage came into view, the yard filled with flowers of all kinds that made a riot of color and lent a touch of beauty to the monotonous landscape.

Mrs. Maddox involuntarily gave a pleased exclamation. "Let's ask for a drink and see the flowers," she suggested to her husband who drove the car.

The knock at the open door was answered by a pleasant-faced old lady who seemed to consider it a privilege to give thirsty travelers a drink. "If you would like some sandwiches and a glass of milk I could serve you," she suggested as they turned from the pump. "They cost a quarter for the two, I never mind asking tourists if they would like to buy some refreshments, for I give that money to missions."

Mrs. Maddox looked surprised, she could not conceive of anybody so far removed from neighbors, so far from town and the busy life of the world being interested in anything. "Don't you get very lonely here?" she asked when the dainty sandwiches and cold milk had been served.

"Oh, no; not at all," was the old lady's bright answer. "I find enough to occupy all my time. My husband had reverses and lost most of his property, but this little farm was left; he was too old to start over again and stand the strain of competition, so we came here. We must practice strict economy, but we raise all our own vegetables, with chickens and a few hogs, and we manage to get along. We had never lived in

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such a simple way and it was a sacrifice to come here. I decided that I could make my mind a dirty backyard with regrets, with complaints of this lot, by lack of interest in everything because of changed conditions, or I could have my mind a beautiful garden by cultivating a cheerful spirit, and by making the best of what was left. We have each other, we have good books, we subscribe for two standard magazines, there are my flowers to care for, a garden that needs attention all summer, then there are so many fine things to think about all the time. I had to live with myself, I had my husband to cheer and comfort, so I have tried to cultivate the beautiful garden sort of mind. I try to help travelers by giving them flowers to look at, and I aid the missionary work a little bit by the sale of my milk and

sandwiches. No, the days are not long enough for all I find to do and to think about," she concluded.

The sandwiches were eaten and Mrs. Maddox opened her pocketbook and dropped a shining five-dollar gold piece into the old lady's hand. "I want to give that for your missionary work because you have taught me such a good lesson. I have many blessings, many comforts, so much happiness, yet a dull day, a disappointment, monotonous scenery as we have had today, anything that does not please me turns my mind into the dirty background of discontent that you spoke of. I am glad that we stopped here today and I will not forget your lesson after this; I will strive to cultivate the beautiful garden mind because I must live with myself, and others must live with me."

## Making the Neighborhood Safe for Dot

BY MARTHA PORTER FRAM

**J**OHN," Lucy Morton began as she poured her husband's tea. Lucy was always starting something at the dinner table—but after all it was sure to be something that needed starting. "It looks as if, after all our planning and our care in every way we could think of, we have made the very greatest mistake we could in buying this house."

Frankly, John was astonished. He had never seen Lucy as happy as she had been since they had decided to buy the house. Of course it was more than he could well afford, but it was worth the price and the years of sacrifice to have Lucy as happy as she had been to see Paul and Dorothy in the sandpile with the children from the houses on either side. There had been no children very close to the house they had just moved from and Dorothy had been wild with delight on seeing the neighborhood full.

"Dissatisfied, already? Thought you were a fixture here." Whatever the situation was he knew that she would find a solution.

"It's these neighborhood children!

"I have taken every spare minute since Dorothy Ann came trying to train her to be ladylike and show some aptitude for culture. But she has gone mad thinking of having someone to play with. They run riot all day long. Today being Saturday, the older ones have been at home and one would think bedlam had turned loose. They don't play games but tear all over the neighborhood, back, front and street. After a while—about noon—they stopped playing so hard and seemed to be thinking of something else to be doing when Dorothy invited them in to see her things. I had just finished my cleaning and was ready for a quiet rest when in they trooped."

"But you know you have always encouraged her having her friends at home so you could keep your eyes on them," interrupted her husband.

"Children, yes, but these are vandals. They have no conception of property rights or any rights at all of the other person. The little one Dorothy's age I have tried to cultivate and let Dot have

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one companion. She is the best one." Then as the enormity of the whole situation heaped itself up before her eyes again she looked at him hopelessly while she asked,

"What am I to do? Mrs. Van Meter seems to be a good woman and makes a pleasant neighbor and I can't fall out with them. She doesn't know how to do and she has so much work with all the children. They have already gotten the upper hand of her."

"Well, dear, the only thing I can think of is a little bit of missionary work. We can't move out right now and they show no signs of leaving."

"But, John, you can't do missionary work with a boy who treats a fine book like a rag doll. That big one acted like he had never had a book in his hands before, and he did not stop until he went through every volume that I make her be so careful with. Then he turned to Dorothy and whispered, 'Get your mother to read us that story about that boy fighting a giant.' But the greatest blow I had was when Dot answered, 'No, I don't like stories, I'd rather play.' My Dot said that! After all the work I have done trying to get her interested in books and things of that kind."

"But, Lucy, the fact that he wanted to hear a story was one point in his favor."

"Yes, Mrs. Van Meter said she never had time to read to her children and they didn't have any books of their own at all. Mrs. Womble is never at home to see what hers are doing and all the mothers are just like that."

"Poor little tads! No wonder they don't even know how to treat a book."

John and Lucy Morton could imagine no tragedy greater than to be bookless and storyless, and somehow his expression aroused her sympathy, thereby giving her wrath a rest.

The next afternoon as Mrs. Morton sat on the front porch with her sewing Dorothy came racing up the walk with Philip the vandal leader. Just before they reached the steps which was the apparent goal, Dorothy dropped a ball and took the time to pick it up and consequently lost the race. Vexed with her-

self she declared she had really won but that she had to pick up her ball.

"You are not as good a sport as Atalanta, are you, Dorothy?" her mother asked. Dorothy looked ashamed but Philip was all ears.

"Mrs. Morton, who is Atalanta?" he asked.

In less than five minutes every riotous youngster had settled down upon the steps, and one story followed another until she sent them away saying she would have to save a few for another day. The truth was she wanted to leave them hungry for more. But Philip tarried after the others had returned to their play. Soon Mrs. Morton led him to Dorothy's book shelves and talked to him of many that would interest him. When Mrs. Morton told him he might come there in the afternoon and read for himself his gratitude approached pathos.

It was a week later that Mrs. Morton again brought up the subject.

"John," she said, "you know the little room behind the library that you said you were going to fix up for a den. Do you suppose you could do without it for a little while longer? I hate to ask it but it seems the only way out. I am giving my time and effort and something must be done. Can you use one end of the library for your things?"

So it was arranged. That room had an outside entrance and much coming and going need not interfere with the living room peace and order. Every book in the house which could in any way be used for juvenile purposes went into the clubroom. Pictures were carefully selected for the walls regardless of the needs of the rest of the house. Character was being built in this room. Two card tables were commandeered and comfortable chairs found their way into the room which was to have been a den.

Even the attic did its part and yielded old-fashioned games. There were found old-maid, finch, lotto, checkers and parchesi. Last came an old game-board—a relic of Mrs. Morton's own childhood.

Philip was the clan ringleader—for better or for worse. Mrs. Morton chose

him for better. He, it was, she called on to help with the moving, straightening, planning. He hung the pictures, brought down the tables and helped tie fresh covers on.

"Now, Philip, these younger children do not know how to care for a book; and no one can really love the inside of a book and treat the outside with neglect. Suppose we write out some rules and you can type them on your brother's typewriter."

So together they wrote rules concerning the care of books—clean fingers, turning leaves, bending backs, and all kinds of careless treatment. She could see that Philip was quietly taking notes for himself and also that he would be a self-appointed guardian of property in that room.

Soon the club room was ready for formal opening which was to be a social and business meeting to discuss plans. Philip came to his friend the morning of the party.

"Mrs. Morton, I would like to do something for the clubroom and mother says I may take the money out of my bank and I would like to get one of those small phonographs. You can get one for fifteen dollars that is pretty good and—and—I think that would be nice, don't you?"

"Why, Philip, that would be one of the nicest things about it, and we have some old records for a starter."

They named it "Ye Friendship House" because, as Mrs. Morton explained, one might meet all one's friends there, books, pictures, friends, and comrades.

The club adopted rigid rules for itself. In name it was a self-governing body but the hand of Mrs. Morton was on everything. Music could only be played at certain hours, in that way insuring hours of quiet for the children who came to read. This also held for the noisy games as finch. Each child must leave the things in order. Boisterousness was taboo at any time. Friday evening was reading hour. Mrs. Morton or her husband devoted two hours reading to them or discussing any topic of interest as they might wish or telling the story of a song with its music on

Philip's phonograph.

Outdoor playing was by no means discouraged, not even the noisy games, but somehow there had disappeared before the winter was over that spirit of running riot. They had learned that playing *something* was better than just playing at random. Even there many of the old-fashioned games were revived. They found fresh fields for their pleasure in Fruit Basket Turned Over, Marching Round the Levee, London Bridge is Falling Down, and others.

The winter advanced but Mrs. Morton, having started upon an idea, usually worked it for its full value: Her visit to the attic for the games had given her an inspiration which demanded more time than the others.

After many readings of fairy stories, colonial days, myths, giants and pirates they took to the stage. This was easily improvised in the attic itself. The older children knew something of dramatization from their school work which made the director's work some lighter. Philip was stage manager and David the next in line was property man. It is wonderful what an old trunk of discarded finery can yield, when mixed with fertile imagination, in the way of costumes and stage property.

While they were engrossed in taking the part of Cinderella, Robin Hood, Brother Rabbit or King Midas they did not know they were learning sportsmanship, co-operation and comradeship. They were no longer mere children turned out to play but people who were living their dreams of fairies and golden halls.

Mrs. Morton saw Dorothy, though just a bit too willing to follow the others, growing into a happy girl surrounded by friends who were an honor and a pleasure. She was taking a real interest in the things her mother had so longed to have her.

Philip she considered her masterpiece. He guided the mind of the crowd. He had found his place and found himself. Never a bad boy he was now the dependence of Mrs. Morton and the embodiment of all that was good and clever to the children.

"Dear," John Morton began, "I was

in Jack Manning's office today and he wants to buy our place. Says he likes it out here so much. He offered me twelve thousand for it. What do you say? That's two thousand clear profit."

"Two thousand indeed," his wife retorted. "What is two thousand dollars to living in the nicest neighborhood in town? Where else could you find as nice children for Dorothy and Paul to play with? Why, I was over in Sunset Heights the other day and Mrs. Marshall's youngsters and all the rest of the crowd were literally running wild. She says she can't do a thing with hers and is worrying herself to death. And the mothers don't speak half the time, they are so busy taking up the children's quarrels. Two thousand indeed. I'll take a neighborhood where Dot is safe for mine!"

And her husband smiled reminiscently but said never a word.

## The Garden of Long Ago

BY WILLIS P. KNIGHT

As we drive along and see a fine garden, we admire it. How much more would we enjoy that garden if it contained some of those old-fashioned blooms—the phlox, hollyhocks, cabbage roses, arethusa, satin flowers, Canterbury bells, and others so favored by our foremothers! Yes, sometimes we do come across a little garden of those old flower favorites, but the real, old-fashioned garden is a thing of the past.

In the years of long ago, our grandmothers took special delight in the garden furnishings as well as the flowers themselves. There were trellises, parterres, arbors, bowers, grottoes, and many things with which we are no longer familiar. Then, there were water adornments such as cascades, canals, fountains, and basins, all lending their bit to the landscape. Some of these things were very interesting indeed.

Arbors used to be called herbars and often we find the name "arch-herbs" among the furnishings of the garden. Probably the earliest arbors, the idea being copied from the old English gar-

dens, were the tree arbors, made by interlacing the branches of trees in such a way as to form a canopy over a long walk. Benches were often placed beneath them so as to aid in the comfort of the lover of the garden. Where trees were not present in numbers suited for such arbors, a line of posts was run parallel to a stone wall. Climbing these posts and across, above the head, were vines that made a delightful shade. Here, too, benches were built, or rocks so placed as to form seats. Sometimes the arbor wall was a lean-to attached to a fence. The term "arch-herbs" was used when poles were set in the ground from four to six feet apart and herbs planted to entwine those posts. They were usually open overhead and were simply to make more secluded the winding walks about the garden.

Trellises were common in all gardens. Some were very plain and were used for climbing plants and others were quite fanciful. The well-known lyre trellises of the south were very pretty and there are a few of them still left in some of the old Virginia gardens. These lyres were from six to eight feet in height and correspondingly wide. When properly trimmed and kept in shape, they were beautiful adornments, and it seemed as if the musical lays of the past ages ought to come from them at almost any moment.

Other oddly shaped trellises were those of animals and birds, as the fancy of the gardener dictated. These were very unique but needed constant care, else, when the plants were in full growth, their shape would be lost in the masses of leaves and blossoms.

Nearly all gardens of long ago had adornments that were not floral in nature yet they added a touch to the garden that could not be had in any other manner. Statues and fountains were popular and hives of bees, dove cotes, sun dials had their places. At one time it was thought to be quite the thing to have obelisks at different points in the garden. They added what was called a delicate foreign touch to the garden.

Perhaps the spot that was best beloved by the young people was the summer house, located near the center of

the old garden. Around it were beds of the more delicate flowers, while vines, like morning glory, entwined its posts. Perhaps I should not limit the delight to the young people for here, on warm days, the grandmothers used to sit and knit while they chatted and entertained their friends there, the young ladies of the family serving tea or dainty cakes to them. From here they could look over the whole garden, tell of the different flowers and their significance and be truly neighborly.

The gardens of the wealthy people were not complete unless they had gradings so as to have winding valleys, dales, terraces, slopes, labyrinths, amphitheaters and what were termed "serpentine meanders" in them. And in addition, the southern gardens always had pleasant grounds, partridge grounds, hare warrens, and deer paddocks.

At times, one might think that the designer of the old garden went a step too far to get "next to nature" when he laid out spots with fallen trees, wood-piles and haystacks in supposedly natural positions. But one can readily see that the real garden of long ago meant more than a few square yards of the flowers of our great-grandmother's time such as one finds in this age, even if such patches are around a century old house. Not that we are averse to discovering those interesting blooms, for those old flowers do give us a thrill we cannot describe, but what an experience it would be to be taken back a hundred and fifty years to a genuine old garden and roam its winding paths and catch the scent of the flowers while in the distance we might see a deer, hare, partridge or peacock and stop at a safe distance to watch the bees as they flew to and from the hives!

## Propaganda

BY MERCER O. CLARK

On July fourth, 1918, my companion and I took a long ride through the beautiful Champagne Valley which lies to the east of Chalons-sur-Marne and between Verdun and Reims. All day we rode inspecting traffic posts, finding the loca-

tion of different regiments and getting a general outline of the lay of the land and other information that would be of use to our company in the handling of the moving of an army. Much confusion could always be avoided in battle or in the movement of troops if the military police were familiar with the country and could give useful and accurate knowledge to those who demanded it.

On the return trip to our company, which was located in Vardney, we noticed a red balloon of considerable size descending into a field near the road. We spurred our horses over the ditch between the road and field and reached the balloon as it struck the ground. We found it to be made of a stiff quality of paper and in the basket was found a quantity of pamphlets printed in French. The enemy had hoped that the balloon would be found by the peasants and the folders distributed and read. They were trying to break the morale of the French civilians knowing that this would have its influence over the army. We destroyed the pamphlets and the balloon after saving a part of the latter for souvenirs, a piece of which I have now with my other relics of war.

Our country is being flooded today with a large amount of printed matter that is unfit for the youth of our land to read. Much of it is the agent of Satan who would poison the minds and souls of men and women. As followers of Christ we should use every agency within our power to combat this evil. We should endeavor to destroy these works so that they can no longer corrupt those whose minds are pure and innocent. Parents and Sunday school teachers as well as ministers and teachers of day schools should use their influence to get the boys and girls to read only that which is clean and wholesome. Books and magazines should be furnished for the children. A child as a rule will read, and unless the proper reading matter is provided he will read that which is not wholesome.

Libraries should be established and maintained by our Sabbath schools, and fathers and mothers should invest a few dollars a year in magazines the reading matter of which tends to ele-

vate rather than tear down. There are many such published, and money spent in this way is well spent and will give far greater return than if invested in stocks and bonds or lands and goods. The Bible, of course, should be the center around which all reading should cir-

cle, but the normal boy and girl and older person for that matter require something more than this. Let us see that the child has in his reach books and papers that will help him to develop into a strong Christian man and a leader among the people.

## What Thoughts Will Do

BY ANNE GUILBERT MAHON

While visiting a friend in a distant city, I noticed, every day, an aged man passing her house, slowly, uncertainly, feeling his way with a cane. Many times a day he passed the house. I could hear his cane tapping the sidewalk, and the measured footsteps as he went around the block and then around again, for his "constitutional."

"It is a sad case," my friend told me. "He is losing his eyesight. He has tried everything, has had operations and the very best doctors and specialists; but nothing can be done. His sight is gradually leaving him. It is almost gone now."

"But," she added, "did you notice how bright and happy he is?"

I responded that it had surprised me to see how cheerful he always was, knowing that he was facing total blindness.

"He told me," said my friend, "that he never allows himself to think of that. He realized some time ago that it is largely our thoughts—our mental attitude—which determine our happiness, not earthly possessions, or physical enjoyment, or the things that come to us."

"So," she continued, "he resolutely puts out of his mind all thoughts of his approaching blindness, and is determined to be happy in spite of it—to be happy in his thoughts."

"As he walks around the block, he is thinking all the time about pleasant things. He thinks over what his daughter read him from the newspaper that morning, about the book which his wife is reading to him in the evenings. Sometimes he lets his mind dwell on the pleasant journeys he has taken, for he is an old man, you know, and has had a great many experiences and traveled to many distant places. He tells me that

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he has a whole storehouse of beautiful mind-pictures which he can dwell upon whenever he wishes, and which make him so happy that he forgets all about his affliction.

"I made up my mind," he said, "that it is something which cannot possibly be helped. We have done everything to try to prevent the blindness and have not been successful, so, as it is inevitable, I must just make the best of it and be as contented and happy as I can in spite of it." That is the reason he is always smiling and happy-looking."

"He says he takes every bit of pleasure that comes his way every day, also," continued my friend. "He likes to stop and chat with people. He looks forward to meeting old friends and acquaintances and talking with them while he is on his daily walks. He enjoys being out in the open air and he cultivates the uses and enjoyments of his own faculties. His ear is very keen, and he defines to himself the different sounds that he hears—the song of the birds, the barking of dogs, the whinnying of horses, the different footsteps. He says it is interesting to note the different kinds of footsteps and to imagine what kind of people they belong to. It makes an interesting little game for him. It is the same way with the various odors. He has a sharp sense of smell. He loves the scent of the spring and summer flowers. In the autumn, he loves the smell of the dead leaves and the smoke from the bonfires. His walks are full of interest, he says, even though he cannot see."

"He is surely an example to us," she added. "It shows what our thoughts can do for us, and how anyone can be contented and happy if he just determines to make the best of everything."

HOME DEPARTMENT MAGAZINE

## Daily Home Readings and Lesson Studies

Recommended for Daily Worship in the Home

Prepared by J. D. MOORE

## The Story of Ezekiel

LESSON PILOT: July 1 to July 7

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. Circumstances of Ezekiel's Call. (Mon.)
2. Two phases of Ezekiel's preparation. (Tues.)
3. What did Ezekiel's vision mean? (Wed.)
4. Why Ezekiel ate the book. (Thurs.)
5. Ezekiel's responsibility as a watchman. (Fri.)
6. By what is a life tested? (Sat.)
7. In what ways God preserves us. (Sun.)

### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. To whom was Ezekiel sent? (I)
2. What was their condition? (I)
3. Why preach to people who reject the gospel? (I)
4. What God did for Ezekiel's face. (II)
5. What Ezekiel did with God's word. (II)
6. What great bereavement Ezekiel suffered. (III)
7. Why was he forbidden to mourn? (III)

**GOLDEN TEXT**—*As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* Ezekiel 13: 11.

### DAILY READINGS

#### MONDAY, JULY 1

Read Ezekiel 2: 1-7—EZEKIEL'S CALL  
"Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel."

Ezekiel was perhaps among the captives of Judah who were carried to Babylon in the first general deportation which took place in 597 B.C. Five years later, he had the vision by the river of Chebar which resulted in his being commissioned of Jehovah to prophesy among his fellows in captivity. Jeremiah continued his ministry among the people who remained in Judah until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. For a period of nine years the ministry of Ezekiel in Babylon was contemporaneous with that of Jeremiah in Judah. Like Isaiah, Ezekiel, received the call from God in a vision, in which God's glory and power were shown him. He prostrated himself before Jehovah, but he was bidden to stand upon his feet and hear the word of God. He was told that the people to whom he was ordered to go were rebellious, but still he must preach to them that they might at least know that a prophet was among them. Their tribulations had not softened them. They must have the services of a prophet who will inform them con-

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cerning the causes of their downfall and keep alive in them the instincts and ideals of Jehovah worship.

May we consider no situation hopeless into which God commands us to go with his word.

#### TUESDAY, JULY 2

Read Ezekiel 3: 4-11—EZEKIEL'S PREPARATION  
"I have made thy face strong against their faces."

In the command which God gave to Ezekiel to prophesy among the captives, two important facts were stated. The prophet was to be prepared for his task by two lines of information. First, it was a difficult situation. The people to whom he was to minister were not strangers but his own Hebrew-speaking people, his kith and kin and acquaintances among whom he would be as a prophet "not without honor save among his own kindred." They had become hardened against the word of God. To revive them, therefore, was a harder work than to preach acceptably among a people who had never heard of Jehovah. Second, Ezekiel was prepared for his ministry by divine assurance that his face should become as hard as the people's hearts, and that his courage would match their obduracy. God

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would make him equal to his task. These two things are essential elements in the preparation of all God's messengers. No one who regards lightly the work of winning lost and degenerate souls to Christ has any business in the ministry. And no man need enter it without a consciousness that God will give him the strength to face the difficulties involved.

*May the grace of Christ be sufficient for us, enabling us to endure hardships for his sake.*

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 3

*Read Ezekiel 1: 4-14—EZEKIEL'S VISION  
"And I looked."*

Ezekiel was a priest as well as a prophet. He was a priest before he became a prophet. His prophetic ministry did not begin until he received the vision in the land of the Chaldeans by the river of Chebar. It took the captivity to open the heavens to his eyes. In the midst of the sorrowing captives, spiritually even more destitute than nationally, his surroundings furnished the setting for the apocalyptic vision. Broadly interpreted and understood, it was given in order to impress the prophet with the greatness and glory of God by whom he was commissioned. God is represented as being attended by an imposing host of heaven who are his messengers, "hearkening to the voice of his word." And if angels fly like lightning at the bidding of Jehovah, how readily ought the prophet heed the divine command. And furthermore, since Jehovah has such a splendid retinue at his command, how joyous should be his people who trust in him, and how dreadful would be the consequences of resisting his will!

*May God give us visions of his glory so graphic and glorious that our despairing hearts shall hope in him.*

### THURSDAY, JULY 4

*Read Ezekiel 2: 8 to 3: 3—EZEKIEL'S MESSAGE  
"Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."*

With tremendous emphasis God warned Ezekiel against being rebellious like the people to whom he was sent. The prophet must be a willing mouth-

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piece. He must speak out of his heart, and not from compulsion or force even of necessity or duty. The words of God must be in his heart. Hence he is directed to take the roll given him by the Lord and to devour it. It was first of all, to be food for his own soul. It could not be worth more to others than he would make it of value to himself. Before he could communicate it he must assimilate it. Something more than a mere knowledge of it is implied in this experience. Ezekiel needed to get the Word into the currents of his own life, and make it the basis of his personal strength and testimony. He must be full of it, for "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh." Many a preacher has a hum-drum message for no other reason than that he has not devoured the Bible nor made it a vital part of his own life. To his surprise, perhaps, Ezekiel found the book sweet in his mouth. He liked the taste of it, than which there was nothing sweeter. Does the Bible please your palate? If it does, it has a place in your heart. If it is distasteful to you, your heart is bad and for that reason the Word of God is an indigestible roll. Certainly the minister of Christ must feed constantly and copiously on the Word of God.

*May we delight in God's Word and feed daily on its precious words.*

### FRIDAY, JULY 5

*Read Ezekiel 3: 16-21—EZEKIEL'S RESPONSIBILITY  
"Give them warning from me."*

It was the duty of a watchman in ancient times to keep a sharp lookout from his tower for the approach of marauders or invaders, and to warn the people, who did not occupy such an eminent outlook, of the coming of the enemy and of all the dangers to which they were exposed. He was a sentinel. God made Ezekiel such a watchman over the Children of Israel in Babylon. They would be subjected to many perils, and it was his duty to warn them of every one. His responsibility extended to good and bad alike. If he should fail to warn the wicked so that the wicked should perish, his blood would be required at the delinquent watchman's hand. Or

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if a righteous man goes wrong and the sentinel does not warn him of the evil consequences of his way, so that he dies, his blood is required of the watchman. On the other hand, if the prophet warn the wicked but the wicked heed not his warning, the death of the transgressor is not chargeable to the prophet. Or if the righteous avoid the way of sin through the warning of the watchman, not only will he live but the watchman also has delivered his soul. In either event, the prophet cannot escape his responsibility except by faithfully giving the people God's word. Having done that he is free from further responsibility.

*May we seek to have that safety for ourselves that includes the salvation of all others who will be saved.*

### SATURDAY, JULY 6

*Read Matthew 7: 24-28—HEARING AND OBEYING  
"It fell not, for it was founded on a rock."*

In closing the sermon on the Mount, Jesus laid great stress upon the importance of his disciples building on the words he had just spoken to them. They could not be permanently useful if they did not do so. They had heard his sayings, but would they do them? Character is shaped not by hearing alone but by the words of truth imbedded in the structure of life. God's word is fundamental to every abiding character or career. But it has to be translated into deeds. The test of anything is its foundation. A house is no more durable than the pillars on which it rests. Into every life there come testing times. Storms will blow. Floods will arise. The problem of permanence is not that of exemption from stress but of such fundamental qualities of character that one can withstand the unusual strain. Christ supplies such a foundation, and it is to be had by no other means.

*May we build our lives on the abiding word of Christ.*

### SUNDAY, JULY 7

*Read Psalm 121—JEHOVAH A PRESERVER  
"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil."*

By the eyes of faith, we look to God for help when dangers threaten us or our own strength fails. He is able to deliver, because it is he who made the

heavens and the earth. And by a knowledge of his word we understand that he is as willing to aid us as he is able to do so. By observing his warnings, our feet are unmoved from the paths of righteousness and safety. While we sleep, unconscious of the stealthy approach of harm, he stands over us a sleepless sentinel and guard. As we go forth in the heat and toil of the day, he is a "shade" upon our right hand so that we are not overcome by the heat of the day. Nor are our wits addled by the moonbeams that steal through the window into our faces at night. Whether we are awake or asleep, whether we are going out or coming in, God alone is our protector and helper.

*As we trust in Christ as our Saviour unto life eternal, may we trust him to keep us during the life temporal.*

### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, July 7

Topic—The Story of Ezekiel.  
THE LARGER LESSON—Ezekiel 1: 1-3; 2: 1 to 8: 27;  
8: 1-4; 11: 22-25; 24: 16-24; 30: 30-33.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. EZEKIEL'S CALL

*Ezekiel 3: 4* And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.

5 For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel;

6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

As a messenger of Jehovah, Ezekiel was commissioned to go to the "house of Israel," the captives of Judah in Babylon. He was to proclaim the word of God to folks who had heard it before and with whom it had become an old and obsolete message. They had not listened to God himself, and still the prophet was sent to them even though he was told they would not hearken unto him. The ministers of Christ are to preach even to people whom they know will reject the gospel in order that the word of God may be perpetuated, even if its hearers perish for having rejected it.

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## II. EZEKIEL'S COURAGE

Ezekiel 3: 8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads.

9 As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.

10 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.

Ezekiel would be divinely encouraged to undertake the hard task to which he was called. His face would be strengthened and fortified against the hardness of the people's hearts, so that his courage would be even greater than their rebellion against God. Furthermore, Ezekiel was to take God's words into his own heart and himself hear the divine voice, else he would weaken and fall. And the results of his ministry were to be left with God. "Whether they will hear, or whether they will for-

bear" was not a question for the messenger. His duty was to tell the folks what God said.

## III. EZEKIEL'S COMPOSURE

Ezekiel 24: 15 ¶ Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.

18 So I spake unto the people in the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

It is characteristic of the very brave that they can endure great suffering without outward or visible signs of emotional disturbance. Ezekiel had been told his face would be made as adamant. As proof of his courage, God commanded him to show no signs of grief when his beloved wife should be suddenly taken away from him. He did as he was told, when the awful stroke fell. His self-possession was equal to the crisis.

## Ezekiel Teaches Personal Responsibility

LESSON PILOT: July 8 to July 14

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. Do we suffer for others' sins? (Mon.)
2. Ezekiel's two-fold responsibility. (Tues.)
3. How spiritual gifts impose responsibilities. (Wed.)
4. Who has the greatest responsibility? (Thurs.)
5. How are opportunities distributed? (Fri.)
6. In what way are people judged by works? (Sat.)
7. To whom does God do good? (Sun.)

### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. When the prophet is responsible. (I)
2. When the prophet is not responsible. (I)
3. Does God want the wicked to perish? (II)
4. What does he want them to do? (II)
5. The nature of true penitence. (III)
6. How is it shown? (III)
7. What are its rewards? (III)

GOLDEN TEXT—*Each one of us shall give account of himself to God.* Romans 14: 12.

## DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, JULY 8

Read Ezekiel 18: 20-30—PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

"I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways."

Many of the captives in Babylon were doubtless disposed to think that their distress was due to wrongdoing on the part of their fathers and that

they were the innocent victims of an inherited decline. However, Ezekiel said a different word to them. As wicked as their fathers had been, their own sins had brought them to their unfortunate destination. Yet among them there were some who shared the distress of their fellows who were not responsible for it. They were personally righteous and would be saved. And there was hope

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even for those whose wickedness had resulted disastrously, for they could repent and be forgiven. Jehovah had been charged with being unjust, or "unequal" in that the people on whom the hour of calamity struck were no more wicked than their fathers who had not been visited with such adversity. But Ezekiel declared that righteousness and wickedness are personal qualities instead of national traits. The righteous would be punished for forsaking his righteousness, and the wicked will be spared who turns from his wickedness.

*May we realize that each of us must give an account of himself to God.*

TUESDAY, JULY 9

Read Ezekiel 23: 7-16—OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY.  
"Thou shalt bear the word from my mouth and warn them from me."

As a watchman, Ezekiel's responsibility was two-fold. First, he was to bear the word from the mouth of God. He himself would not be able to detect the coming of foes which might creep in stealthily and under cover of darkness. God alone would know the danger. Consequently the prophet would himself have to be warned of God before he could warn the people. His duty was first to hear the truth from the lips of God. He was to speak "from" Jehovah, and in his name. Should he speak upon his own authority, he would be derelict, and there would probably be some among the listeners whose ideas would be worthy of consideration equally with his own. But if he speaks the words of God, none can doubt or gain-say his message. His faithfulness was to be manifest both toward God and toward the people. Many are the times when ministers of Christ are censured for speaking plainly against the various forms of wickedness which exist today. But they cannot discharge their own duty unless they do so. The blood of all who perish unwarned would be required at their hands.

*May we listen to God's words and obey his command to speak them to all who are about us.*

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10

Read Romans 12: 1-8—RESPONSIBILITY FOR GIFTS.  
"All members have not the same office."

Paul describes the body of Christians as that of Christ, with the mem-

bers differing in office and duties but all bound together by a common tie and a single purpose. Such a body is of course spiritual, and the members are qualified for their various places in it by non-conformity to the world and by conformity to the will of God. None are to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think but think of themselves as each is endowed for service in the body. Gifts differ with the differences in the measure of faith. Some are more highly endowed than others. But responsibility is uniform. Each is to do that for which the Spirit has fitted him. The gift of capacity carries with it the duty to use it for the purposes for which it was given. There cannot be any rightful neglect of one's gift simply because it is not as great as that which another has. There can be no transfer of responsibility from one who has a particular gift to another who has the same gift.

*May we each be faithful in the service which Christ has assigned to us as members of his spiritual body.*

THURSDAY, JULY 11

Read Matthew 11: 20-24—RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO LIGHT.  
"It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you."

Jesus severely rebuked the people of the cities where he had done so many mighty works because they rejected him. By those to whom he had given the greatest light, he was most stoutly opposed. The guilt of unbelief is in proportion to its intensity and stubbornness. People who witnessed the miracles of Jesus and heard his words either accepted him as the Christ or else shut their eyes maliciously to the light. Unbelief was therefore the sign and seal of a bad heart. Chorazin and Bethsaida were Jewish cities to whom Jesus as the Messiah must necessarily give the greater part of his service and attention. Yet he would have received a much greater welcome in the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon had he gone to them with the gospel. Therefore, the Gentiles who do not believe will be far better off at the day of Judgment than the Jews who rejected Christ in face of the full truth concerning him. And

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even Capernaum, where Jesus made his home, and which had been thus exalted to heaven, would be brought to destruction because the people refused to accept their Christ and "knew not the day of their visitation." As wicked as were the Sodomites, they will fare better before the Judge than the unbelievers of Capernaum who walked with Jesus in the flesh and yet denied his nature.

*Since our light is unexcelled, may we remember that our responsibilities are great in proportion to it.*

#### FRIDAY, JULY 12

Read Matthew 25: 19-30—RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO OPPORTUNITY  
"The lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them."

In the parable of the Talents, Jesus illustrated the principles and bases on which men will be judged who have received benefits at his hands, and who are therefore obliged to give an account to him therefor. It sets forth the doctrine of rewards and punishments. The two are the same in principle. Unless there was demerit in faithlessness there would not be any merit in faithfulness. It should be observed, in studying this parable, that the talents were given to each of the servants, "according to his ability." Talents then could not here mean ability but rather opportunity. The servants were free to make whatever use of their opportunities they wished. The fact that one was given five, another two and another one, did not indicate partiality on the part of the lord. He merely graduated the task to every man's ability. Those who increased their holdings 100 per cent received exactly the same commendation and reward. The one who was too lazy to put his opportunity to any use whatever, was condemned for not having permitted someone else to employ it even at an ordinary rate of interest. On the day of reckoning, he had to condemn his lord in order to justify himself, just as a dishonest man on pay-day charges his creditor with being cruel and unjust.

*May we each use well whatever opportunities for service God has given us.*

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#### SATURDAY, JULY 13

Read Romans 2: 1-11—REWARD AND RETRIBUTION  
"Will render to ever man according to his deed."

Justice is one of the essential attributes of God. It is impossible to conceive of an unjust God. His administration of mercy is also one of justice. He could not be merciful if he were not just. In the salvation and reward of the righteous, his justice will be made manifest as truly as in the condemnation and expulsion of the wicked. Whether he is the one or the other depends entirely on the attitude of those who are judged toward him and his will concerning them. He does not desire the death of any. He exhausts his divine resources to provide a way of escape for men. But if they will not heed it, they must pass under his wrath. His judgment of men will be personal. Every man's character will show up according to his works. They are the weaknesses by which he will be judged.

*May we "by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality."*

#### SUNDAY, JULY 14

Read Psalm 125—ABIDING IN JEHOVAH  
"They that trust in Jehovah shall be as mount Zion which cannot be moved."

The security of the righteous is perhaps the keynote of the Psalms. A sense of safety and deliverance has ever inspired the hearts of men to holiest praise and to the highest strains of music. The spirit of the Jubilee prevails where captives are set free from their fetters and liberty becomes the happy lot of all. Trust in God affords the soul a sense of safety which cannot be taken away. It means his presence in the heart. It means his over-shadowing care and protection against sin and the evil designs of wicked men. The Lord will do good to those who do good, who in the fortress of his presence keep themselves within the area of safety. But those "who turn aside unto their crooked ways," will have their portion with the workers of iniquity.

*May we "abide in Christ," ever living and laboring with him and for him.*

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#### LESSON STUDY

#### SUNDAY, JULY 14

Topic—Ezekiel Teaches Personal Responsibility.  
THE LARGER LESSON—Ezekiel 18: 1-22; 33: 1-20.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. THE PROPHET'S RESPONSIBILITY

Ezekiel 3: 7. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

9 Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

As a watchman appointed by Jehovah, Ezekiel was charged with the duty of declaring God's words to the people, and to make known to them the perils to which they were exposed. If he failed to warn the wicked, the death of the wicked would be laid at his door. But if after being faithfully warned, the wicked continues to do wickedly and perish, the prophet has done his duty and is not responsible. But he could not discharge his duty without constant and diligent watchfulness. He would be responsible if he failed to detect the coming of enemies, however stealthily they might come, so that he would fail to give the people due and timely notice and they perish on account of his drowsiness and ignorance.

##### II. WHY PEOPLE PERISH

Ezekiel 33: 10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

13 When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but

for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

God commanded Ezekiel to declare to the people that he did not want them to perish, that he did not delight in the death of any. His pleasure is that all men shall be saved. But he cannot save them unless they will turn to him. It will be the same at last with one who turns from righteousness to wickedness as with one who had never desisted from his wicked ways. Self-righteousness is not goodness before God. And wickedness is not remembered by him where the sinner turns from it and heeds the warning voice of God while mercy can be obtained. This is true for the reason that when one turns from his wickedness he ceases to be wicked, and in the presence of God to whom he turns he finds safety and life.

##### III. WHY MEN ARE SAVED

Ezekiel 33: 14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

A turning to God must be sincere in order to be effectual in the saving of the soul. Otherwise it is of the nature of self-righteousness which will not deliver a man "in the day of his transgression." The sinner must turn from his sin. He must "restore the pledge" taken in unjust dealings with his fellows. He must "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." Where there is a desire to quit sin there is the wish to "walk in the statutes of life." Then none of the sins which one has committed are charged against him, for he has complied with the conditions upon which God's mercy and grace can save him. The prophet does not preach salvation by works. Lest some might think so he expressly states that the "righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression." It is the righteousness of Christ which delivers us in the day of our justification.

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## Ezekiel's Vision of Hope

LESSON PILOT: July 15 to July 21

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. What the stream in Ezekiel's vision represented. (Mon.)
2. Some of the blessings of the kingdom. (Tues.)
3. By what two means is the kingdom set up? (Wed.)
4. Why God's kingdom is permanent. (Thurs.)
5. When will full kingdom glories appear? (Fri.)
6. To whom are God's invitations given? (Sat.)
7. Why praise God continually? (Sun.)

**GOLDEN TEXT**—*Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.* Isaiah 9: 7.

### DAILY READINGS

#### MONDAY, JULY 15

Read Ezekiel 47: 1-10—**EZEKIEL'S VISION OF HOPE**  
"Everything that liveth, that moveth, whithersoever the waters shall come, shall live."

In the vision of Ezekiel, the stream can refer only to the kingdom of God as it was brought among men by Jesus Christ. The water of the stream was by a later apocalyptic seer described as "the water of life." It was spoken of by Christ himself to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. For the prophet's encouragement during the dark days of the captivity in Babylon when Jerusalem was laid waste and the temple was no more, this vision of a spiritual restoration was given. Though God had suffered Judah to be smitten, his purpose concerning his people would come to fruition. Out of the new house of the Lord would issue forth a stream of blessings to the world, as had been prophesied by the prophets before him, "From Zion should go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." It would increase as it went on until it should become a mighty, impassable river. It would irrigate the desert and make it abundantly fruitful. It would team with life both within its bosom and on its banks.

*May we be encouraged by God's assurance that his kingdom shall prevail and become a blessing to all the world.*

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### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. Who started the kingdom of God? (I)
2. How he started it. (I)
3. The size of the kingdom at its source. (II)
4. How it increases. (II)
5. What of its size ultimately? (II)
6. What term fittingly typifies God's kingdom? (III)
7. Why the figure is so apt. (III)

#### TUESDAY, JULY 16

Read Psalm 72: 12-20—**BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM**

"Let the whole earth be filled with his glory."

It seems this was the last psalm David ever wrote. It was composed for Solomon his son upon whom he had imposed the authority and position of king shortly before he died. He prayed that the judgments and wisdom of God might be given the new king, and extolled Jehovah as the universal King before whom all the rulers of the earth should bow. He then described the essential qualities and character of the great King: as the deliverer of the needy who cry to him and as the helper of the poor and helpless. He is a King who "ever lives" as contrasted with earthly kings in whose honor the people shout "Long live the king!" From afar the gold of Sheba will be brought to him, and to him there shall ascend streams of prayer and praise from every quarter of the world. Great prosperity will attend his reign. A handful of wheat sown on the mountain top will produce a yield like the cedar growths of Lebanon. The cities shall flourish like grass in the meadow. All nations shall bless Jehovah the great King. The psalm is truly missionary in its inspiration. Faith perceives the advancing hosts of God marching to sure victory under their Commander and King.

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*May our hope and inspiration be found in the vision of God's ultimate glory among men.*

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 17

Read Isaiah 28: 1-12—**TRIUMPHS OF THE KINGDOM**  
"The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

God's kingdom is to be set up by the overthrow of all its foes and by the establishment of all its forces. The high and mighty who have arrogantly resisted his authority shall be brought low before him. His power breaks the arm that is raised against him. "All enemies must be put under his feet." The spirits of wickedness in high places must be conquered and destroyed. Even death itself will be swallowed up in the victory of his irresistible approach. He will unveil the nations, taking from their faces the covering of darkness which had hidden them from the light of life. He will make a feast for them who have been starved by the husks and privations and inequalities imposed on his people by usurpers. God will then receive the full ascription of praise from all nations who will say of him, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him." Isaiah elsewhere expressed the same idea when he said, "The isles wait for thee." How many people there are among the heathen nations today who are waiting for Christ, of whom, when they are taught the truth concerning him will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him." Christ is the answer to the cry of every sin-sick soul, and he is the light of every unenlightened mind.

*May we not be discouraged by reverses or because the kingdom comes so slowly, for triumph is certain some day.*

#### THURSDAY, JULY 18

Read Psalm 72: 1-10—**PERMANENCE OF THE KINGDOM**

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

We find in the first part of David's memorable last psalm, which he composed for his son Solomon when he ascended the throne of Israel, the singer's characterization of God's kingdom. David could not think of any kingdom as permanent which did not bring peace to the people by righteousness and judg-

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ment. He conceived the reign of God as that of supreme beneficence for all men. He is the "judge of the poor" and the enemy of the oppressor. Throughout all generations Jehovah is to be known and praised for his mercies which come down like the rain on the new mown grass, which would otherwise be bitten of the sun; or like the refreshing showers on the parched earth. Under his reign the righteous, not the wicked, will flourish. His people will come into their own and become the keepers of the world's wealth and the custodians of its prosperity. Because truth and righteousness can not be overthrown, his foes "shall lick the dust" in complete subjection to his sovereign power. None can stand against him, and his dominion shall become world wide. Even the remote wilderness dwellers shall bow to him. The barbarian shall whisper his praise in broken language. The mighty kings of earth will pay tribute also, bringing their tributes and gifts to be laid at his feet.

*May we help to carry on the kingdom of our Lord till it shall extend from sea to sea.*

#### FRIDAY, JULY 19

Read Revelation 22: 1-7—**GLORIES OF THE KINGDOM**  
"There shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it."

Not unlike Ezekiel's vision of the kingdom was that of John the apostle on the island of Patmos. However, the vision of John was fuller and more specific because Christ had come as the Lamb of God by whom the kingdom was established. Of course, his inspiration was far in advance of that of Ezekiel. He saw the river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, specifying the exact source of the stream which Ezekiel saw issuing from the temple. But both alike contemplated the glories of the kingdom in its triumphant rather than its militant career. Its transcendent magnificence is deferred until it shall be consummated. It is comparable to a city through which flows a stream pure as crystal, bordered by trees which yield every sort of fruit every month, with

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eternal youth and beauty everywhere. There is no curse, for sin is unknown within its walls. The redeemed shall worship before the throne of God and of the Lamb, with the sign of their Saviour stamped with his own blood on their foreheads. They shall need no light of candle or sun or moon, because day will be eternal and light unbroken by the fall of night.

*O grant us, our blessed Lord, hope of eternal life through thine own redeeming grace.*

#### SATURDAY, JULY 20

Read Isaiah 55: 1-5—THE UNIVERSAL INVITATION  
"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

Isaiah's inspiration brought him the view of God's kingdom in its process through the world, as a stream running through every realm of life and within the reach of everybody. He pictures it as the free fountain where all who thirst may come and drink. There is no charge for it. It is given without money and without price. The poor need not stay away because they have no money, and the rich need not think they can purchase it. All alike are invited. One is as welcome as another. The only condition is that the thirsty shall "come." The kingdom must be sought. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The price to be paid is that of a sincere effort to win it, not the purchasing power of one's own merits to obtain it. Why do perishing souls refuse to come? Why do men spend their money and time for that which cannot satisfy and refuse to receive without price that which alone can afford real pleasure and peace?

*May God help us to carry his gracious invitation to every one to whom he himself extends it.*

#### SUNDAY, JULY 21

Read Psalm 100—PRAISE TO JEHOVAH  
"Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing."

God can not be served by unwilling subjects. The spirit of worship and praise must be in their hearts. If they are his servants they have such a spirit. The voice of gladness never dies out of

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their lips. God's kingdom is a realm of service, both now and hereafter. It is not exemption from work but labor with all resistance removed, so that his servants serve him night and day. He is our maker, "for it is he that made us"; and he is our redeemer, "for we are his people"; and he is our keeper, for "we are the sheep of his pasture." And not to us only, but he is good unto all and his truth "endureth to all generations."

*May we have no greater joy than to serve the Lord to whom we are indebted for life and hope and peace.*

### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, July 21

Topic—Ezekiel's Vision of Hope.  
THE LARGER LESSON—Ezekiel 47: 1-12.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. THE SOURCE OF THE KINGDOM

*Ezekiel 47: 1* Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

2 Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

Of course, the kingdom of God on earth must have a terrestrial setting. It must come out of the house of God. Jesus Christ had to come to this world in order to establish his earthly reign. He started the stream of life from the imperishable fountain in himself while he was "in this temple." The mystical house of Ezekiel's vision referred to Christ, the head and source of God's kingdom among men.

##### II. THE INCREASE OF THE KINGDOM

*Ezekiel 47: 3* And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

4 Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

5 Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for

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the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

Flowing from the house, the stream Ezekiel saw was a small rivulet, only ankle deep a thousand cubits from its source. But as he followed it, at each thousand cubits its depth was respectively to the knees, to the loins and to an unfathomable depth. The kingdom of God increases as it goes on. It sends its tributaries into every side and every land. It is destined to become world wide in its sweep and immeasurable in its volume.

##### III. THE BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

*Ezekiel 47: 6* ¶ And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

7 Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.

8 Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being

brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

9 And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

Water is fittingly emblematic of life and fertility, of blessing and prosperity. Throughout the Bible, it is employed to describe the beneficence of the reign of Christ in the world. It irrigates everything that comes within its sphere and makes it fruitful. The Christless life is barren of all good fruits. It is sterile. It is not watered with life. God's kingdom in the hearts of men ameliorate social conditions so that deserts are converted into gardens and the sore spots of the world are healed. The stream of its influence produces and bears in its bosom a teeming life, and everywhere about it there are blessings and bounties without number.

## The Story of Daniel

LESSON PILOT: July 22 to July 28

#### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. When was Daniel carried to Babylon? (Mon.)
2. Why Daniel refused the meat and wine. (Tues.)
3. Why Daniel was given understanding. (Wed.)
4. The main point of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. (Thurs.)
5. What honors were given Daniel? (Fri.)
6. What was the design of Daniel's vision of last things? (Sat.)
7. What will become of God's enemies? (Sun.)

GOLDEN TEXT—They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Daniel 12: 3.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, JULY 22

Read Daniel 1: 1-9—DANIEL TAKEN TO BABYLON  
"Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah."

It was during the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, that Nebuchadnezzar, in 606 B.C., captured Jerusalem and made Judah tributary to Babylon. Jehoiakim

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himself was carried captive to Babylon, with the choicest youths of his royal family. This is regarded as the beginning of the seventy years of captivity, although there was not at this time a general deportation of the people. Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiakin, was left on the throne of Judah and made subject to the Babylonian power but he was not

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deposed. Only a part of the vessels of the temple were taken to Shinar as trophies of victory to be placed in the temple of the Assyrian god at that place. Nebuchadnezzar evidently meant to make Judah a permanent vassal to his throne; and to accomplish this, he directed that the best of the young men of the seed royal should be carried to Babylon and educated there for later service to the king in the province of Judah. Daniel was one of the four chosen by the king's officer to become the wards of the Babylonian court and to be adopted into the royal family of Nebuchadnezzar.

*May God raise up a friend for every aspiring worthy young person whose training will mean progress for his cause.*

#### TUESDAY, JULY 23

Read Daniel 1: 10-20—**DANIEL'S TEMPERATE LIVING**  
"Give us pulse to eat, and water to drink."

Daniel and his three friends enjoyed great distinction at the court of Babylon. They were captives only as honored guests of the empire in the interest of which they were being reared and educated at the king's expense. Their fare was that of the princes of the realm, of the most expensive and elaborate variety, consisting of meats and wines of the choicest sorts. By every law of social propriety, the Hebrews would have consented to such a diet. But Daniel, as leader and spokesman for the group, asked that they be not obliged to eat those things, suggesting a simpler menu and one in keeping with his religious scruples, although he based his request solely on the ground of the physical benefits to be had from the simpler fare. He could ask that an exception be made in their case because they wanted something less elaborate than what was given the other princes at the king's table. He requested that the test be limited to ten days, agreeing that if after they had eaten a vegetable diet for that length of time they were not being sufficiently nourished, they would consent to eat what the king had commanded should be given them. The prince of the eunuchs granted their request, with the result that they were not only

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better nourished in body but were superior in intellect to the other princes who had eaten the heavier foods and had beclouded their brains with strong drinks.

*May God give our young people the courage to desist from intemperance even in those social circles where drinking prevails.*

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 24

Read Daniel 9: 15-23—**DANIEL PRAYING FOR UNDERSTANDING**  
"O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding."

Although Daniel was not among the exiles who returned from Babylon, his prayers for Jerusalem undoubtedly had something to do with the return. It was with his window open toward Jerusalem that he prayed three times every day throughout his long life. And it was for Jerusalem, the city of God, that he prayed so fervently at the "time of the evening oblation" that the angel Gabriel appeared to him in person, assuring him of great skill and understanding. The downfall of Judah was in consequence of the transgression and wrongdoings of the people; and there could not be any restoration of Jerusalem until there would be a reconciliation to God. Daniel made the cause of the captives his own, and took upon himself the sins which had brought disaster to them, and implored divine forgiveness. He who was least guilty was most penitent. The best people are always most ready to confess their sins.

*May we realize that God gives us his greatest personal blessings in answer to our prayers for the welfare of others.*

#### THURSDAY, JULY 25

Read Daniel 2: 36-45—**DANIEL INTERPRETING THE KING'S DREAM**  
"We will tell the interpretation thereof before the king."

It was not an editorial "we" that Daniel used when he told King Nebuchadnezzar both what he had dreamed and what his dream meant. He had plainly said to the king that it was God who had revealed the secret and that it was not because he was wiser than other people that he could make the thing known to him. Daniel then related the forgotten dream to his king, which, no doubt, Nebuchadnezzar remembered

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when it was rehearsed before him. But Daniel went further and interpreted it. It was the interpretation which was of supreme importance. The golden head of the great image he saw was none other than Nebuchadnezzar himself to whom the great Jehovah had given universal dominion and power. But other inferior kingdoms would arise after him, each becoming less powerful than its predecessor until the last would be as infirm as a pedestal made of iron slugs mixed with miry clay. Speculation might guess as to the different kingdoms represented here, but the point of the vision was that of the kingdom which God would set up and which, like the stone out of the mountain, would crush the mighty empires of the world and itself become a great mountain filling the whole earth. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom would taper down and run out, but God's kingdom which is not "cut out of the mountain with hands" would be everlasting and universal.

*May we always put God's glory before our own renown in whatever success he enables us to achieve.*

#### FRIDAY, JULY 26

Read Daniel 2: 46-49—**DANIEL HONORED**  
"Then the king made Daniel a great man."

It was as Jehovah's representative and spokesman that Daniel permitted the king to fall on his face and worship him. It was in obedience to God that the king did so. There was no occasion for Daniel to rebuke the king for indulging in hero worship, for Nebuchadnezzar himself said to Daniel, "Your God is a God of gods, and Lord of lords." This did not signify that the king became a believer or worshiper of Jehovah, but that he recognized God's superior power and wisdom as a revealer of secrets. Daniel's religion made him of great value to the empire, and for that reason he was promoted in it. He was made viceroy over the entire Babylonian province, and head of the college of wise men of Babylon. They were the highest positions within the gift of the king. But Daniel's sudden elevation did not cause him to forget his friends. With becoming modesty he requested the king to make his three companions his associates in the govern-

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ment of the province of Babylon, which was done.

*Let us pray that God's humble servants may be accorded leadership in the councils of the nations.*

#### SATURDAY, JULY 27

Read Daniel 7: 9-14—**THE LAST TIMES FORESEEN**  
"Judgment was set, and the books were opened."

Like the vision of John in the Revelation, Daniel's vision was designed for the comfort and encouragement of God's people. When the cause of God languishes and his people grow weary and despondent in the conflict with sin in the world which threatens to overcome them, they have a great joy when God gives them tokens that they are not fighting a losing battle but that his kingdom shall be established and all opposition to it destroyed. Daniel beheld Jehovah, the "Ancient of days," in his glory with innumerable hosts of worshippers around him. He saw also the "Son of man" coming to Jehovah God and receive dominion and glory and a kingdom that cannot be destroyed. This vision of Daniel sweeps across the age from the coming of Christ on earth to the consummation of his kingdom in heaven.

*In our struggles and labors for Christ, may we rejoice to know that his kingdom moves steadily on to a glorious culmination.*

#### SUNDAY, JULY 28

Read Psalm 46—**JEHOVAH OUR REFUGE**  
"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

All the patriarchs, prophets and fathers have found God a shelter from evil and harm. Generations of saints have tested his mercy and power to deliver. How foolish it is for us to distrust him! Kingdoms rise and fall but his dominion is unmovable and everlasting. The heathen rage in their opposition to him but the earth melts at the breath of his voice. The only enemies he has are the foes of righteousness, and he shall be exalted above them, "breaking the bow and cutting the spear asunder."

*May we so fully trust in God that we shall know he is present with us whatever befalls us.*

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## LESSON STUDY

Sunday, July 28

TOPIC—The Story of Daniel.  
THE LARGER LESSON—Daniel 1: 1-21; 2: 13-19; 4: 10; 7: 23; 8: 15-18; 9: 20-25; 10: 1-19; 11: 2.

### Lesson Text and Comment

#### I. DANIEL'S PHYSICAL FITNESS

**Daniel 1: 1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

3 And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes:

4 Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

Daniel was well born, having been one of the princes of Judah who was taken with King Jehoiakim to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Because of his splendid person, he, with three companions, was selected to be trained in Chaldean learning for service to the empire, most probably as viceroys back in their native land of Judah. He was "without blemish and well favoured." He was a pleasing personality, such as was considered able to "stand before the king." It was a good recommendation that he was physically perfect, indicating extraordinary qualities for leadership and endurance.

#### II. DANIEL'S INTELLECTUAL SUPERIORITY

**Daniel 1: 19** And the king communed with them: and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Michael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Daniel's handsome appearance would have stood him in poor stead had he not qualities of mind which marked him as a youth of unusual character. He and his friends had abstained from the

strong meats and liquors which were so abundant on the king's table and had eaten vegetables entirely. Not only were their bodies healthier and stronger than those of the other princes of Babylon but their minds were clearer, their perception quicker and their understanding of things more apt and accurate.

#### III. DANIEL'S SPIRITUAL WISDOM

**Daniel 2: 17** Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret: that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hath given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

24 Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

When Nebuchadnezzar threatened death to all the wise men in his realm unless some of them would tell him a dream he had and interpret it for him, Daniel, who presided over the college of the wise men, would have been slain could he not have complied with the royal demand. He asked his companions to join him in prayer to God that the secret might be revealed to him. God heard their prayer, and in a vision made known the king's dream to Daniel. He then requested Nebuchadnezzar to stay the order of execution until he could come before him and make known to him what his dream had been and what it meant. Daniel blessed God for hearing his prayer, and magnified Jehovah as the revealer of the secret.

## Belshazzar's Feast

LESSON PILOT: July 29 to August 4

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. Some evils of Intemperance. (Mon.)
2. Why Belshazzar's sin was so great. (Tues.)
3. Why Benhadad blundered. (Wed.)
4. Are "light wines" the solution to the liquor problem? (Thurs.)
5. How the flesh and the Spirit are opposite. (Fri.)
6. The highest motive for law observance. (Sat.)
7. Contrasts between good and bad men. (Sun.)

### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. How God humbled Nebuchadnezzar. (I)
2. Did Belshazzar take warning from it? (I)
3. Why did he not do so? (I)
4. In what sinful excesses Belshazzar indulged. (II)
5. From whom came the hand that wrote on the wall? (III)
6. What did the writing mean? (III)
7. Was there no hope? Why? (III)

GOLDEN TEXT—*Be not drunk with wine wherein is riot.* Ephesians 5: 18.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, JULY 29

Read Daniel 5: 1-9.—BELSHAZZAR'S REVELRY  
"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand."

In the account of Belshazzar's feast, we have recorded most of the great aspects of intemperance. It is irreverence and a disregard for holy things, just as Belshazzar profaned the sacred vessels his father took from Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem that he and his prostitutes might drink wine in them. It leads to licentiousness. It is idolatrous, enslaving the will to appetite and making drink the ruler without a rival. Bacchus is the god of the drinking man, not with image encased in gold or silver but reflected in the flowing bowl. It brings on premonitions of disaster and the dread of terrible consequences. Intemperance has its ghosts of imminent terror and its armless finger-prints of nameless dread in glaring hieroglyphics before one's eyes. It induces boasting and leads to promises which one cannot fulfill. Belshazzar offered to make any one who could interpret the writing on the wall the third ruler in his kingdom, but before daybreak he had no kingdom. What boasts the drunken man makes, offering riches and honor when he himself is stranded and disgraced!

*May the evils of drink drive the conscience of the world to an intoxicant before the handwriting appears on the wall.*

TUESDAY, JULY 30

Read Daniel 5: 17-28.—A MYSTERY INTERPRETED

"Give thy rewards to another, yet I will read the writing to the king."

When consternation reigned in Belshazzar's banquet hall, and the drunken brawlers were so terrified by the writing on the wall that they knew not what to do, the king's lawful wife, the queen, came in, it seems for the first time, and told Belshazzar about the prophet, Daniel. So Daniel is sent for, at the dead hour of night. Belshazzar repeats his offer of reward to him if he will read the writing. At a glance Daniel saw the meaning of the message, reading the letters perpendicularly instead of horizontally, as some think. He at once told the king to make his presents to himself and to give his rewards to somebody else, and yet he would interpret the words on the wall. But it was a fearful message Daniel had to give him, charging him first with having spurned the lesson of humility which his father had so dearly learned, and had boastfully profaned even the sacred vessels of the Lord's house with his licentiousness and debauchery. The prophet declared that the hand that wrote was "sent from" the God whom the king had despised, and that his doom was sealed: his kingdom was at an end, he himself had been found wanting and the Medes and Persians would divide his realm among themselves.

May we as a people banish strong drink lest the enemy dig under our walls while we revel.

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

Read 1 Kings 20: 16-21—A DRUNKEN ARMY DEFEATED  
"But Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions."

In the days of Ahab, king of Israel, Benhadad, king of Syria, formed an alliance with thirty-two petty kings to wage war and set up a siege against Samaria, the capital of Israel. But it was a poorly managed campaign. Benhadad thought it was such an easy job that he could stay drunk most of the time and capture the city between drinks! It was not because of any goodness in Ahab that Samaria was delivered but because of the insane command given to his soldiers by the drunken Benhadad when the army of Israel, numbering 7,000 in all, went out to meet the Syrian hosts of many times that number. The 232 besiegers of Israel went first to face the besiegers, and when couriers reported to Benhadad that the Israelites had appeared, he bawled out the order, "Take them alive, whether for peace or for war." It was an impossible task imposed on the Syrian army, for how could they, as numerous and as powerful as they might have been, overpower and take alive 7,000 fighting men in solid phalanx? And besides, every Israelite got his man among the Syrians, and soon Benhadad's hosts were in flight, with the reeling king on horseback running after them!

Let no one think or say that drink does not lower a man's efficiency but causes irretrievable blunders.

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 1

Read Proverbs 23: 29-35—THE WOES OF DRUNKENNESS  
"Who hath we?"

Long before the day of the stronger drinks, of modern times, the evils of wine were recognized and lamented by reformers and patriots. The man who today advocates beer and light wines as the solution of the liquor problem is merely advocating a return to the conditions which the wise man here describes and deplores. There is no remedy for strong drinks by weakening the drinks.

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Let the drink be ever so low in alcoholic content, if it is intoxicating, it falls within the category of beverages which should be outlawed and banned by all right-thinking people. The horrors of drink here depicted have been witnessed over and over again. The disgusting spectacle of drunkenness has no favorable aspect. It has no compensations. Drink brings on contentions without cause and words without sense. It has the poison of the adder in its cup and the bite of the serpent in its "kick." If a man follows the habit it will ruin him at last. It will bring him to poverty and clothe his children in rags. It will bring on delirium and premature senility, draining his vitality with its venom.

May God hasten the day when all intoxicants shall be banned by a righteous public sentiment.

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 2

Read Galatians 5: 16, 26—THE WORKS OF THE FLESH  
"Now the works of the flesh are manifest."

Paul put the flesh and the Spirit in antipodal relations. No one can affiliate with both at the same time. And the only way to keep from fulfilling the desire of the flesh is to walk in the Spirit. "To be carnally minded is death." Those who are unredeemed do the works of the flesh and are therefore under the law, with its condemnation resting on them. But all who are regenerate are led by the Spirit and are not under the law but are justified. Good men sometimes go wrong and fall into the ways of the flesh and yet they do not the works of the flesh, that is to say, they do not follow the carnal mind and are not in love with the sinful inclinations of their nature. Revellings, drunkenness, lasciviousness, envyings and such sins are manifestly the deeds of the flesh in which no one can see God, for the flesh is mortal and unrighteous.

May we realize that the Spirit alone in the hearts of men can stop the ravages of intemperance and wrongdoing.

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

Read Romans 13: 1-10—RESPECT FOR LAW  
"Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

Respect for law is an evidence of a stable and healthy civil government

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among any people whether they are unenlightened or highly civilized. Law as a principle of right conduct is fundamental to the preservation and welfare of society. God's moral government is based on common law, which may be defined as the eternal principles of truth and justice. He has also ordained that mankind shall observe these same principles in their mutual relations. To that end, he has set up the ordinance of government which all should respect out of deference to the very conditions for their well-being. To disregard God's order is to pay the price for one's contempt for his own welfare. With the man who is not controlled by higher motives, regard for law may be rendered from fear of suffering the consequences of disobedience to it. But with the Christian, law observance should be not a matter of servile fear but of righteous conviction. Hence all law involves restraints or prohibitions which the law observer conscientiously respects and which the lawless must respect or be penalized for his disrespect. We have no occasion to repeal the Eighteenth amendment simply because men are lawless in disregarding it. To do so for that reason would be to nullify the whole foundation of law and order.

May we not only be law observing but strive to make our laws more effective in restraining crime of all kinds.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 4

Read Psalm 1—THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED  
"The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

Striking are the contrasts between the righteous and the wicked, as shown in this psalm. They are not congenial natures but are unlike in desire and disposition. The godly seek not the associations and fellowships of the ungodly. The righteous love and respect the laws of God and men, while the wicked fear not God nor regard men. The good man is like a perennial, fruitful tree, a blessing to all around him; while the bad man is like the worthless chaff that is driven by the wind from the threshing floor. The righteous stand not in the way of sinners, and sinners stand not in the day of judgment when they meet with the consequences and

penalties of their wrongdoing. God knows and preserves the life of the God-fearing man but the ungodly rush headlong to destruction.

May we live the life of the righteous which alone is profitable both for this present world and that which is to come.

#### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, August 4

TOPIC—Belshazzar's Feast.  
THE LARGER LESSON—Daniel 5: 1-31.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. BELSHAZZAR, THE HEEDLESS

Daniel 5: 17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:

19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him; whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

Belshazzar's father, Nebuchadnezzar, had been humbled because of his arrogance and pride; and yet the son took not warning from the father's bitter experience. Satan tries to hoodwink his victims by leading them to think the judgments of sin upon others will not fall upon them. One generation is slow to profit by the experiences of the former generations, hence the world moves slowly upgrade. There are plenty of men who have seen drunken companions fill a drunkard's grave who will yet go on drinking to meet the same sad end. How foolish to heed not the warning signals thrown out along the pathway of those who have gone on before us!

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### II. BELSHAZZAR THE RECKLESS

Daniel 5: 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;

23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Naturally enough, since Belshazzar was not warned by his father's humiliation, he plunged into excesses and sins of all sorts. He would still the voice of his conscience by the gaieties of the festive "smart set." He sought the companionship of harlots and whoremongers. He spat in the face of God by sipping his liquors from the vessels of the Lord's house. He praised the gods in whose honor he could revel in sinful indulgence. How low one can fall who sins against light!

## Daniel Among the Lions

LESSON PILOT: August 5 to August 11

#### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. Who conspired against Daniel, and why? (Mon.)
2. Why Daniel was saved from the lions. (Tues.)
3. Why courage does not hesitate. (Wed.)
4. Why Ezra did not ask for a military escort. (Thurs.)
5. What it takes to be a brave witness for Christ. (Fri.)
6. Why is the whole armor of God needed? (Sat.)
7. Who are assured of safety? (Sun.)

GOLDEN TEXT—*The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, And delivereth them.* Psalm 34: 7.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, AUGUST 5

Read Daniel 5: 4-18—THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL.  
"Thus said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

After the fall of Belshazzar, Darius the conqueror retained the services of Daniel as prime minister. No man in the empire was better acquainted with the affairs of state than he, and no one

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### III. BELSHAZZAR THE HOPELESS

Daniel 5: 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

25 And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Belshazzar's day of retribution had come in the night of his revelry. Daniel could give him no encouragement whatever. God had inscribed his death sentence on the wall of his banqueting hall. His conscience had been aroused only in time to witness the execution of his soul. He could not then make amends, for his doom was sealed and his days of grace gone. Because he was unworthy of it, his kingdom had been taken from him and divided among the Medes and Persians. In that night was Belshazzar slain and Darius the Mede took his throne.

#### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. Did Daniel at first know of the conspiracy? (I)
2. Did he know of the king's decree? (I)
3. Was his praying to God unlawful? (I)
4. Did Daniel try to justify his act? (II)
5. Did he try to escape the sentence of the decree? (II)
6. How did Darius feel the night Daniel was in the den? (III)
7. What did he find at the cave next morning? (III)

was more trustworthy or better qualified to manage them. So the promise made to Daniel by Belshazzar was fulfilled by Darius, and he was made the premier of the whole kingdom, being the first of three presidents appointed over the 120 satraps, or princes, in charge of as many districts or provinces. Daniel's popularity with the new king caused his subordinates to envy him. A group of them secretly formed a plot to

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discover in him some cause for a charge of disloyalty to Darius. But his record was clear. Nothing he had done could be construed as an act of unfaithfulness. Hence they must hatch up a scheme whereby Daniel might be forced either to desist from his custom of praying to Jehovah three times every day or suffer the death sentence for doing so. His loyalty to God was the only ground on which they might make up a charge of disloyalty to Darius. Hence they prevailed on the king, under the pretext of great admiration for him, to issue a decree that no man in his realm should worship any other god than the king for thirty days. Daniel was caught in their trap. He did not hesitate to go on with his custom of prayer.

*May our foes find nothing to censure in us but our fidelity to God.*

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

Read Daniel 6: 18-23—IN THE LIONS' DEN.  
"They brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions."

Darius knew that Daniel was innocent of treason and that he had to be cast in the den of lions on a technicality of the law of his empire which could not be altered to save even his premier. But the king expressed his confidence that the God whom Daniel served would save him from the lions. He had seen something of the power and mercy of Jehovah portrayed in the character of Daniel, and had such faith in Jehovah as he had in Daniel's integrity and innocence. However, he spent the night fasting and ordered that the musicians who regularly played before him should not come into his presence. The king was more restless in his palace than Daniel was among the lions. Early in the morning, he went to the cave, broke the seal which could now be torn away since the sentence of execution had been carried out, and called to Daniel to know if his God had delivered him. A voice responded from the pit which brought joy to the heart of the king. Darius then ordered that the conspirators should be thrown to the lions, for they had been disloyal to their king in having made him their cat's-paw to execute a treacherous and murderous conspiracy against Daniel.

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*May we be persistent in our faith in God, and trust him for vindication when the morning breaks.*

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

Read Daniel 3: 8-18—THE COURAGE OF DANIEL'S FRIENDS.  
"We will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

In order to unify religion in his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar set up a huge golden image in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon and issued a decree that all his subjects should worship it. The three Hebrew children, whose Chaldean names were Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refused to obey the command of the king and were reported to him for their disobedience. They were prominent men and officers in the empire and the king could not tolerate any disrespect shown his command by them especially. He offered to give them another chance, if they would concede to his decree. But they did not want any other opportunity. They would not do otherwise than they had done. They did not hesitate to tell him what they would do. The mandate of an absolute monarch could not move them from their purpose to worship Jehovah only. They told him plainly they would not bow to his idol if they had a thousand opportunities to do so. The God whom they worshiped might not keep them from the fiery furnace but he would deliver them out of the hands of a monarch who dared to put himself in the place of the Almighty.

*May God give us the courage to stand up for him in the face of popular evils and a frowning world.*

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

Read Ezra 8: 21-30—THE COURAGE OF EZRA.  
"I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us."

It was a long and dangerous road from Persia to Palestine. Robber bands infested the route, and wandering tribes who lived by pillage were likely to appear at most any point on the journey. Artaxerxes, the Persian monarch, had commissioned Ezra to conduct a return of the exiles to Jerusalem and to carry with them the offerings that had been collected for the Lord's house. Ezra had expressed to his king his full con-

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fidence in God's approval of the expedition, and hence of divine protection in it. Artaxerxes would gladly have given him a military escort had Ezra requested that it be done. But he said he was ashamed to do so because it would appear that his faith in God's care was wavering. However, he was anxious that Jehovah would certainly be with them. He felt it especially necessary to be assured of divine aid since he was to seek no other sort. So Ezra proclaimed a fast asking that the Jews assemble by the river of Ahava for prayer. The fasting continued until they "were entreated of the Lord" by divine assurance that God had guaranteed them a safe journey without the help of soldiers.

*Before we launch any business, may we seek divine help and then, with that assured, may we go on without fear.*

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

Read Acts 4: 13-20—**COURAGEOUS WITNESSING FOR CHRIST**

"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

All Jerusalem was stirred with the report of the healing of the incurable cripple at the temple gate by Peter and John. The Jews who had clamored for the death of Jesus were in consternation to hear that the miracle had been performed in the name of the Jesus they had crucified. The Sanhedrin that had instigated the murder of Jesus had to take note of the report, and hence called Peter and John before them in a judicial hearing. Peter boldly declared that it was in Jesus' name the lame man had been cured, and that there was salvation in no other name under heaven. The man who had been healed stood with them before the Sanhedrin, and his presence was witness to the fact which could not be distrusted. The council could not deny the miracle, and decided to try to suppress the work of the men who were preaching in the name they hated so bitterly. Accordingly the apostles were "threatened" and commanded not to speak at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter said to them, You may judge whether it is right for us to hearken unto you more than unto God; but whether you judge us innocent or

guilty of doing wrong, one thing is certain we will not, as we cannot, but speak the things we know.

*May our critics have cause to take note of us "that we have been with Jesus."*

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

Read Ephesians 6: 10-20—**AN EXHORTATION TO COURAGE**

"My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

There is a strength that is not "in the Lord" and a power that is not "of his might." There is a courage that betokens self-possession or candor only, and a strength of will that is a mere obstinacy instead of a virtue. But Christians ought to have such courage and strength as can be had only in the Lord and from him. Their foes are such that victory over them is not possible by human power. They are spirits of wickedness, against which natural forces cannot prevail. Defense against them is necessary to safety. The Christian should be equipped with the armor of God which he knows is sufficient, else in the fight his courage will fail and he will be defeated. He must put it all on, with not a piece left off, lest the enemy find the exposed vulnerable spot and make a fatal thrust at that place. Yet it is not faith in the armor which wins, for with the whole armor on, Christians are to pray mightily to God, "with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." It is the Spirit who makes effective the "breastplate of righteousness," "the shield of faith," "the helmet of salvation," and the "sword of the Spirit."

*Let us put on the whole armor of God and then look to him for strength to use it.*

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 11

Read Psalm 91: 9-16—**SECURITY IN JEHOVAH**  
"There shall no evil befall thee."

Throughout the Bible, God's promises are made to individuals who trust him. It is "he," or "every one" or "whoever" all the way through. His blessings are personal and his care for each is individual and direct. He has assured the righteous of safety. His angels are ordered to guard them lest they should slip and hurt themselves or be injured by wicked designers. The soul

that makes the most High his habitation can with safety "tread upon the lion," like Daniel who for a night rested his head on the shaggy coats of hungry lions. Because we set our love upon God, he sets his special guardians over us. Because we have been in the habit of calling on him, he has the custom of hearing us and knows our voice when we call upon him.

*Thank God for the absolute safety of all who put their trust in him.*

#### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, August 11

Text—*Daniel Among the Lions.*  
Text LEADER LECTURE—*Daniel 6: 1-28.*

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. CONTINUING THE HABIT OF PRAYER

*Daniel 6: 10* Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

Although Daniel knew the writing was signed which forbade any one praying to any deity, god or man but the king, for the space of thirty days, he continued his custom of praying three times each day with his window open toward Jerusalem. He had no occasion to quit the habit. He would pray to Jehovah regardless of the king's decree or of the consequences of disregarding it. Yet it was not his purpose to violate his king's command. In fact it was not the demand of Darius but of the envious princes who had been successful in making a puppet out of their monarch. Daniel did not conceal himself in going on with his prayer habit. He was doing nothing secretly, nor ostentatiously, but just exactly as he had been doing all the time. In getting into his enemies' trap, he merely continued his customary devotions, for they had set it in the path of his relations to God.

##### II. ABIDING THE KING'S DECREE

*Daniel 6: 16* Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

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17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him; and his sleep went from him.

Without a murmur, it seems, Daniel submitted to the order of Darius that he be cast into the den of lions. He was perhaps unaware then of the plot which had brought the death sentence on him, knowing only that the king had made such a decree and that he had not observed it. He did not recant nor attempt to justify himself. According to the law, he should be thrown to the lions, and to the lions he went without hesitation.

##### III. SURVIVING THE DEATH SENTENCE

*Daniel 6: 19* Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den; so Daniel was taken up out of the den and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

King Darius spent a sleepless night as his prime minister lay in the den of lions. He lamented his blunder which was all the worse because it was irrevocable. Betimes next morning he hastened to the den and found Daniel ready to report for duty, because God's angel had shut the lions' mouths that they had done him no harm. Jehovah had vindicated him of any wrong either to his king or his God. The ends of the Chaldean law had been met, and Daniel was lifted from the den.

## The Return from Captivity

LESSON PILOT: August 12 to August 18

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. What was Judah's land sabbath? (Mon.)
2. Why the Jews mourned in Babylon. (Tues.)
3. What Jeremiah said about the return. (Wed.)
4. Why Cyrus made his proclamation. (Thurs.)
5. When are afflictions joyous? (Fri.)
6. Who are included in the spiritual restoration? (Sat.)
7. Has God ever taken you from a trap? (Sun.)

### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. Cyrus made his proclamation in what year of his reign? (I)
2. In what form did he make it? (I)
3. What were its terms? (I)
4. What response did Jewish leaders give? (II)
5. What response was made by the Jewish people? (II)
6. Why the Jews were glad to get back to Jerusalem. (III)
7. To whom did they attribute their return? (III)

GOLDEN TEXT—*Jehovah hath done great things for us, Whereof we are glad.*  
Psalm 126: 3.

### DAILY READINGS

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 12

Read 2 Chronicles 36: 14-21—**JUDAH TAKEN CAPTIVE**  
"As long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil three score and ten years."

The downfall of Judah took place according to the prophecy of Jeremiah who continued his ministry in Jerusalem until the city fell completely into the hands of the Chaldeans and was utterly destroyed in 587 B.C. Zedekiah, the last of the kings of Judah, spurned the word of the Lord as proclaimed by Jeremiah, and, as might be expected, was untrue to the Babylonian monarch to whom he was tributary. While in the land of Judah, the people forgot God, but while they lay desolate in Babylon, the land of Palestine enjoyed its sabbaths of rest. Before the captivity, the people ploughed and reaped without resting the land on the seventh year, according to the divine requirement, but afterwards the land had a long sabbath, a jubilee of ten times seven years.

*May we obey God's will ere our desolation forces us to do so.*

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 13

Read Psalm 137: 1-6—**JUDAH MOURNS IN BABYLON**  
"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

What a plaintive song this is from the hearts of captives in a strange land! Although they had sinned and had forfeited the protection of Jehovah, there

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were in them the lingering instincts of the true religion which made them turn their tear-stained faces toward Jerusalem. They were in Babylon but were not Babylonians. They were Jews still, and citizens of that defunct kingdom which, however, continued to exist in their memory. How could they enjoy the music of Chaldea while the songs of Zion kept ringing in their ears, and how could they sing the songs of Zion in a strange land so remote from the sanctuary in the atmosphere of which they were composed and around which gathered all their sacred lore? No, rather than sing the songs of Zion in a strange land, they would hang their harps on the willow trees and let the silence of the harpstrings echo the lament of their hearts.

*May God help us to appreciate his blessings before rather than after we lose them.*

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

Read Jeremiah 29: 10-14—**THE RETURN PROPHESED**  
"I will bring you again into the place where I caused you to be taken away captive."

Jeremiah was explicit in his predictions concerning the captivity. But he could also see further than the downfall. He was enabled not only to foresee who the destroyer would be but also how long the captivity would last. Their national down-sitting would bring about their spiritual uprising. It would take seventy years of mournful absence from

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the Holy Land to bring them to a proper appreciation of what Jehovah had done in giving it to them. They had to become the captives of Babylon before they could become God's free men. Jeremiah's message itself could not be rightly or fully appreciated until after the captivity occurred. But afterwards it doubtless was rehearsed by the captives and helped to keep alive in them the hope of getting back to their beloved land once more.

*Even though we have sinned and are made to suffer for it, may we remember "from whence we have fallen and repent," and rejoice in hope.*

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 15

Read Ezra 1: 1-4—**CYRUS DECREES THE RETURN**  
"He made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing."

It was in 606 B.C. that Chaldean supremacy in Judah began, with the capture of Jerusalem under Jehoiakim and the carrying away of certain of the princes of the land, Daniel among them, to Babylon. After the seventy years, as predicted by Jeremiah, in the year 536, Cyrus, then king of Persia, issued the proclamation authorizing the Jews in his realm to return to Judah and rebuild Jerusalem. It was a diplomatic rather than a religious motive which actuated him in the matter. His Jewish subjects would be worth far more to him as happy citizens in the province of Palestine than they could be as miserable captives in Babylon. It was good statesmanship in him to make the rebuilding of the Lord's house the major consideration because he recognized the fact that the problem of worship was central in that of the people's happiness and efficiency.

*May we realize that our devotion to God measures our worth to the world.*

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 16

Read Psalm 126: 1-6—**REJOICING IN DELIVERANCE**  
"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream."

No affliction seems light while it is being endured, "but afterward it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness." God's people must suffer for their sins, but their penalties are tem-

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poral and have a time limit. In their wake, there is great rejoicing. When Cyrus gave the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem, it seemed to many of them that they were having a delightful dream. It was "too good to be true." Then their harps were taken from the willow trees and their mouths were filled with song. Then it was that their heathen neighbors had occasion to say that the Lord had done great things for them, and they themselves could say, in a hallelujah antiphony, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." It was then they could see that a harvest of joy had sprung up from the tears they had sown.

*May we hear Jesus say, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."*

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 17

Read Isaiah 35: 1-10—**SPIRITUAL RESTORATION**  
"The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come, to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

Isaiah's inspiration perhaps conceived the restoration of Judah but with him it was merely typical of the greater and more far-reaching return of all the Lord's ransomed and the setting up of a spiritual kingdom on earth. He knows it will come by the highway called the way of holiness, which was fulfilled in him who said, "I am the way." The reign of Christ will usher in the era of universal peace and prosperity. Before a restoration can be permanent the hearts of men have to be changed, and a fresh start made in the regeneration of the soul. There is no reformation without regeneration, and only the "ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion."

*May God grant that we shall be among the ransomed of the Lord who shall be authorized to take part in the restoration of all things.*

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

Read Psalm 124—**JEHOVAH A DELIVERER**  
"Our help is in the name of the Lord."

David was never more inspired than when he was singing of Jehovah as a deliverer. So many times in his own life he had been rescued by the hand of God, that he added new strings to

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his harp in praising Jehovah for his deliverances. And not to himself only, but to all Israel had God been a defender. But for God, they would have been swallowed up by those who at various times in their history had risen up against them. Many were the times when they were trapped, as at the Red Sea, like a bird in the net of a fowler, but God's hand opened the trap and let the captives go free.

Let us cry to God continually for his protection and delivering power.

### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, August 18

TOTUS—The Return from Captivity.  
THE LARGER LESSON—Jeremiah 29: 10-14. Ezra 1: 1-11;  
Psalm 126: 1-6.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS

Ezra 1: 1 New in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah had been fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

It was in the first year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon that he issued his proclamation for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. In order to make it an official document, he made it in writing. Thus royal patronage was given the movement and the king himself acknowledged his obligation to build a house for Jehovah in Jerusalem. The Jews were authorized to make contributions of money in case they did not wish to return to Judah themselves. The king's decree did not make it obligatory upon any either to go or to give. As a religious movement it could not have been promoted on any but a voluntary basis.

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##### II. THE RESPONSE OF THE JEWISH ELDERS

Ezra 1: 5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

6 And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

Leaders among the Jews responded to the proclamation of Cyrus immediately, and began to enroll those whom the Spirit of God had raised up to return to Jerusalem. They received the hearty support of their brethren who gave them gifts of money and precious stones besides beasts of burden to carry them back to Judah. There were at the time something less than a half-million Jews in the various provinces of Babylon, but only about one-seventh of them joined the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

##### III. A SONG OF THE RETURN

Psalm 126: 1 When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them.

3 The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

4 Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.

5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

The joy of the returning captives was unbounded. Seventy years of afflictions had prepared them to appreciate the privileges of worshiping God in their native land and according to their revered customs. No longer could their heathen neighbors look upon them with a condescending pity but with admiration for their good fortune under the patronage of King Cyrus himself. But they recognized the good hand of Jehovah in their restoration, and their joy was in his kindness to them. After the long season of sowing in tears, they had come to the harvest of dreams fulfilled and hopes realized.

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## Rebuilding the Temple

LESSON PILOT: August 19 to August 25

#### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. What feast was first celebrated by the returned exiles? (Mon.) (Tues.)
2. Why celebrate the finished foundation? (Wed.)
3. Who asked permission to help them? (Thurs.)
4. Whose aid did the builders accept? (Fri.)
5. How long was the temple in building? (Sat.)
6. What was the temple for? (Sun.)
7. Why love the Lord's house? (Sun.)

#### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. How was the laying of the foundation celebrated? (I)
2. Who wept when they saw it, and why? (I)
3. Who shouted, and why? (I)
4. What prophets urged the builders on? (II)
5. When was the temple finished? (II)
6. Some of the privileges of God's house. (III)
7. Some of its blessings. (III)

GOLDEN TEXT—*I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah.* Psalm 122: 1.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

Read Ezra 3: 1-7—THE ALTAR SET UP  
"Builted the altar of the God of Israel."

It was probably in May, 536 B.C., that the returning exiles left Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel. There were 42,860 of them besides 7,337 servants and maids, with 200 singing men and singing women. Their journey to Palestine consumed several months. However, by the seventh month of that year, corresponding to our month of October, they had all settled themselves in their respective cities, or settlements, according to the register or genealogies which they had kept and by which every one could locate himself in his ancestral estate. The first thing they considered necessary to do was to build an altar to Jehovah on the site of the temple that had been destroyed, so that the people might have opportunity to resume their offerings to the Lord which they had not had the privilege of doing for fifty years. On the first day of October, they began their daily sacrifices to God on the altar, around which they proposed to rebuild their wasted country and beloved city. The regular time for the Feast of Tabernacles was the week of October 15 to 21, and hence they had the chance to celebrate the closing festival of the year according to the custom of former times. Once a day for the first six days of the Feast the peo-

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ple marched in procession around the altar waving the thick boughs of the myrtle trees and on the seventh day they encompassed it seven times with shouts and hosannas. In the spirit of worship so devout, the people poured out their offerings of money for the rebuilding of the temple, the foundations of which had not yet been laid.

May we consider the worship of God primary in every effort for the recovery of wasted fortunes.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20

Read Ezra 3: 8-13—THE TEMPLE FOUNDATIONS LAID

"The builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord."

Doubtless the returned exiles began to clear away the rubbish and debris from the ancient site of the temple soon after they reached Jerusalem. But it was seven months after their return before they began to lay the foundation for the new temple. It was just a year after they left Persia that the foundation of the Lord's house was laid by them in Jerusalem. An elaborate ceremony marked the occasion, with processions of priests in their robes and Levites singing the songs composed by David. It had tremendous significance because it was a successful beginning, and was a portent of a better day for them in the land of their fathers. Among them were some very old men who as youths had seen the first temple, built by Solomon, and who had been carried away to Baby-

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lon fifty-two years before this. These older men wept with a mingled sense of sorrowful remembrance of the first temple with the joyous sight of the new temple foundation, while the younger ones shouted for sheer delight in seeing a long-cherished plan under way for the rehabilitation of their fatherland and the city of David.

*May we consider nothing well started that is not begun for the glory of God.*

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21

Read Ezra 4: 1-6—OPPOSITION OF ENEMIES  
"Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God."

There were in the land of Palestine, left of the captivity, the poor of the land who were ordered to take care of the vineyards for the Babylonian conquerors; and who, during the seventy years' absence of their brethren, intermarried with their non-Jewish neighbors. These people, together with the remnants of the Ten Tribes, were afterwards known as Samaritans, who were half-breed Hebrews, but who were generally despised by the strict orthodox Jews. They, of course, lost their lineage and, therefore, their religious caste and identity with Israel. When Zerubbabel and his associates began to make good headway with the rebuilding of the temple, these people offered to join in with them. But their proposition was instantly rejected because it would have involved the sacrifice of Jewish integrity and distinctiveness.

*May we make no alliances which would mean a compromise of our integrity as God's people.*

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 22

Read Ezra 6: 6-13—ENEMIES AIDING  
"Let the work of this house of God alone."

The Samaritans continually opposed the work of reconstruction carried on by the "children of the captivity," writing letters to the Persian monarch alleging seditious purpose on the part of the Jews, and hiring lawyers to argue the case against them. In the days of the Pseudo-Smerdis, called Artaxerxes, they succeeded in having the work stopped by his order. The following year, however, the usurper was slain and Darius,

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son of Hystaspes, ascended the Persian throne. Under the stirring appeals of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, Zerubbabel and his associates resumed work on the Lord's house. Then Tatnai, who was governor of all the Persian territory west of the Jordan River, and who had opposed the work, wrote a letter to his new king, asking if authority had been given the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem. Darius ordered that the records be searched to see if such grant had been given. The decree of Cyrus, written sixteen years before, was found, and Darius, therefore, returned answer to Tatnai that he should not only let the Jews alone but that he himself should take of the tribute money collected in his province to bear the expenses of the work. Furthermore, that they be abundantly supplied with animals suited to their sacrifices that they might pray for the king; and that timbers, such as they needed to carry out the decree of Cyrus, should be furnished them. "This," said Darius to Tatnai, his governor, "you will do, and do it quickly." Such aid the builders could accept because it was by order of the king, and not a voluntary and presumptuous proposition from the mongrel Samaritans.

*May we so conduct our Lord's work that hindrances will become aids, and everything "fall out to the furtherance of the gospel."*

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

Read Ezra 6: 14-22—THE TEMPLE COMPLETED  
"They builded and finished it."

In the year 515 B.C., twenty years after the foundation was laid, the temple was completed and dedicated. The vigorous preaching of the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, had much to do with the completion of the work. The month of Adar was the last month of the Hebrew year, and it was on the third day of that month that the building was finished. The dedication took place immediately thereafter, with elaborate sacrifices, with priests and Levites performing their duties in the services according to the commands of Moses. The fourteenth day of the following month of Nisan, was the regular time for the

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observance of the Passover. This they anticipated and for it they made all the necessary preparations by undergoing the required ceremonial purifications. The seven days "of unleavened bread" constituting Passover week were observed with great joy, none but the children of the captivity, of course, being allowed to take part except those who "had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel."

*Let us labor for the Lord patiently and perseveringly for "in due season we shall reap if we faint not."*

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 24

Read Mark 11: 11-18—THE PURPOSE OF THE TEMPLE  
"My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer."

Jesus had cleansed the temple nearly two years before this, but it did not stay clean. The hucksters and money changers occupied seats in the court of the Gentiles, utilizing the privileges of the Lord's house for their private and extortionate profits. Jesus defined for them the purposes of the temple, bringing them under conviction by their own consciences for their misuse of the sacred premises. It was a place of prayer and not of business. It was intended to be known as a place of prayer for all nations. The Jews had special but exclusive privileges in it, much less did the temple authorities have the right to offer space in its courts to the highest bidder for commercial purposes.

*May we not only acknowledge that our churches are places of prayer and worship but may we use them for that purpose.*

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 25

Read Psalm 122—LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE  
"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

This is one of the Davidic psalms, and breathes the spirit of worship which characterized him. He was delighted when the time came for the stated services at the tabernacle, for the magnificent temple had not been erected yet and the Ark of the Covenant was housed in a tent he himself had made for it on

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Mount Zion. But he was not worshipping a house, nor yet in a house, though he considered all Jerusalem as God's house, the mecca of the faithful souls that sought to get as close to God as possible by approaching the place where the Ark of God was. The fellowship of worship was most pleasing to him, for the tribesmen from distant places in the land, and from every place in it, mingled together there, with unity of spirit and purpose.

*Whether our church building be pretentious or humble, may we ever seek and pray for its prosperity.*

#### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, August 25

TOPIC—Rebuilding the Temple.

THE LARGER LESSON—Ezra 3: 1 to 6: 22; Psalm 84: 1-12.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. THE FOUNDATION LAID

Ezra 3: 10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

11 And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

Amid elaborate ceremony, the foundation of the temple was laid by the elders and children of the captivity in Jerusalem. It was a most significant event. It marked a distinct step in the reconstruction of the city. There was great rejoicing. But some of the older ones who had seen the magnificent temple of Solomon were moved to tears as the destruction of that house was brought fresh to their memory. The younger ones thought it was the greatest thing they ever saw, and shouted for joy.

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There was mingled the weeping and the shouting that was heard afar off.

## II. THE TEMPLE FINISHED

**Ezra 6: 14** And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy.

The prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, urged the builders on, and encouraged the people to help them so that, against all discouragements and opposition the temple was completed twenty years after the foundation was laid. It was finished on the third day of the last month of the Hebrew year, and was dedicated with great joy in 515 B.C.

## Ezra's Return to Jerusalem

LESSON PILOT: August 26 to September 1

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. For what was Ezra noted? (Mon.)
2. What did the king decree? (Tues.)
3. Why Ezra prayed for divine guidance. (Wed.)
4. Why was Ezra's company especially in danger? (Thurs.)
5. Of what were the Jews in Judea guilty? (Fri.)
6. How Ezra corrected this evil. (Sat.)
7. To what is a longing for God like? (Sun.)

GOLDEN TEXT—*The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good.*

Ezra 8: 22.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, AUGUST 26

Read Ezra 7: 6-10—**THE PURPOSE OF EZRA'S RETURN**  
"To teach in Israel statutes and judgments."

Since the completion and dedication of the temple in Jerusalem, have occurred the incidents recorded in the book of Esther. The Ahasuerus mentioned there was the Xerxes of secular history. Following the promotion of Mordecai

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## III. THE TEMPLE OCCUPIED

**Psalms 84: 1** How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and she swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

The singer is expressing his longing for the privileges and blessing of the Lord's house. He even envies the little sparrow that builds her nest in the corners of the temple, and raises her young before the altars of Jehovah. He wants to stay there in holy meditation and praise, and congratulates all who can abide in its precincts. The house of God should be the most delightful and amiable place in the world for God's people, where Christian fellowship can be had, and where God in a special way can be approached and worshiped.

ing the trip from Persia to Palestine. He was a renowned scribe and an eminent authority in the law of Moses. He not only knew the law, but made it the guide and counsel of his own private life. He had studied it that he might do all it required. He was, therefore, as good a man as he was a scholar. And, besides, he was a great teacher, and had prepared himself by diligent study to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. He had, no doubt, taught the law faithfully and widely among the Jews in Shushan and elsewhere in Persia for years before going to Jerusalem.

*May the teacher of God's Word follow hard on the heels of the builder of the Lord's house.*

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27

Read Ezra 7: 12-22—**THE KING'S AID**  
"Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra, the scribe."

In his decree authorizing Ezra to go back to Jerusalem, King Artaxerxes granted complete liberty to the Jews in his empire. Not one of them could subsequently consider himself a captive in a strange land. All who wanted to go with Ezra were given the privilege of doing so. The king did not issue an edict expelling them, but he made it plain that any Jews who remained anywhere in his kingdom would do so of their own free will. He furthermore authorized the giving of money by all who were willing to make offerings with which sufficient sacrifices for the altar of Jehovah in Jerusalem might be provided. And besides this, he authorized Ezra to make draft on the king's treasury in case the contributions by the people were not enough to furnish all that was needed. But in order that Ezra might not be embarrassed by such a possible necessity, the king commanded that all the tribute money due him from the entire province west of the Jordan River should be made available at once for any financial necessity Ezra might have.

*May the men of wealth and position among us place their riches and honors to the credit of God's kingdom.*

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28

Read Ezra 8: 21-23—**EZRA'S PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE**  
"So we fasted and besought our God."

With Ezra there were 1,496 "males" from among the various Jewish families living in Persia, who volunteered to go to Jerusalem. This number probably meant a total company of not less than 5,000 people. He called them together at the side of the Euphrates River, near the city of Ahava to mobilize for the expedition. While there, he added to the number of emigrants 258 men from among the priests and Levites and Nethinims, or singers, who should be ministers to them for the house of God. Having completed the personnel of the volunteers, Ezra gave his thought to the journey. The way from Ahava to Jerusalem lay north of the Arabian desert, and wandering tribes of robbers were known to infest the region. Not every caravan that started from the east landed safely in Palestine. While he had able-bodied men in his company to the number of about 1,500, yet they were not soldiers and would make a poor defense against the attack of pirates or marauders. So he either had to fling himself entirely on God for guidance or else ask his king for a military escort. But, aside from the possibility of suffering harm at the hands of bandits, he needed divine directions for the journey. So he proclaimed a fast in which they all engaged in earnest entreaty that God would guide and keep them.

*May we find the help of God more helpful than the assistance of men.*

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29

Read Ezra 8: 31-36—**EZRA'S ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM**  
"We came to Jerusalem and abode there three days."

On their journey, the company under Ezra recognized the leadership of Jehovah. The vast sums of money they carried with them would have made their capture a thing much to be desired by some of the peoples living along their route. However, God led them by ways that avoided such perils. After four months of travel, they reached Jerusalem where they rested for three

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days before the caravan was dismantled and demobilized. Then the treasurers into whose hands the money had been placed turned it over to the officers of the temple, who weighed, or counted, it, checking up with the amount which had been delivered to them before leaving Ahava. They offered burnt offerings corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel, thus denoting their spirit of unity for all Israel, now no longer ten tribes and two. In the crucible of affliction, they had been purged of tribal bigotry and welded together in a spiritual brotherhood. Even the king's lieutenants and officers residing west of the Jordan lent their aid to the Jews according to the command of Artaxerxes, purely in complaisance to their king.

*May we with Paul rejoice that Christ is preached, "whether in pretence or in truth."*

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 30

Read Ezra 9: 5-18—EZRA'S PRAYER OF CONFESION

"I fell upon my knees and spread out my hands unto the Lord."

Soon after Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem, the princes reported to him the fact that a great many of the people, including the priests and Levites and other leading men who had come back from captivity with Zerubbabel, had not refrained from marrying among their neighbors, taking for themselves and sons wives who were not of the children of the captivity. This was considered a serious trespass because it would inevitably lead to the loss of Jewish identity through the absorption of the Jews into other races. Furthermore, it would vitiate the ancestral rights and titles to the land which were vested in the tribes according to the distribution made long before by Joshua. Ezra considered it a great evil, and confessed it before God with earnest confession. He acknowledged that the people knew better and that they had wilfully violated the ordinance of Jehovah from of old. Yet he breathed the hope that Jehovah would grant respite and that they might yet escape from further trespass in that matter.

*Let our confession of the sins of others be a prayer for their forgiveness.*

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#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

Read Ezra 10: 9-17—A REFORMATION EXPECTED  
"All the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do."

Following Ezra's confession of the people's sin in taking strange wives, he called upon them to acknowledge their transgression before God. He called them to Jerusalem for conference about the matter. His arraignment of them was severe. They quailed and trembled under the lash of their consciences as well as under a soaking, chilly rain! Ezra's powerful leadership took control and the people all said they would do, or must do, as he said, and put away the strange wives they had taken. But there were so many who had done this that the business of getting rid of such wives was not the work of a day or two, but would have to be done with proper caution and with due allowance for the women who had been brought into the trespass by the erring Jews. It took exactly two months to bring about the separation of all the husbands and wives who had married contrary to the Jewish law.

*May our confession of sin in every case be attended by putting it away.*

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Read Psalm 93: 1—THE SOUL'S LONGING FOR GOD

"My soul thirsteth for thee."

This is one of the songs which David wrote when he was in the wilderness of Judah. He was then a fugitive from Saul, who had determined to slay him. His heart yearns for the presence and power of Jehovah. His hardships had brought him to a keen sense of his need of God, comparable to that of a burning thirst which a traveler experiences when he passes through a dry land where no water is. He can imagine no better fortune than to be favored of God and permitted to praise him for his lovingkindness. Because God had helped him, he believed he would continue to do so. And he would "follow hard after" the Lord, he would keep as close to him as possible, even right at his heels.

*May our trust in God be equal to our distresses, and let us follow Christ close up instead of "afar off."*

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#### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, September 1

Topic—Ezra's Return to Jerusalem.  
THE LAMBTH LESSON—Ezra 7: 1 to 8: 26.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. EZRA'S COMRADES

Ezra 7: 6 This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him.

7 And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.

9 For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

In order that he might serve his countrymen in Judea, Ezra led an expedition of Jews to Jerusalem under the grant of the Persian king, Artaxerxes Longimanus. Volunteers were asked to meet him at the city of Ahava, preparatory to beginning the journey. It was a definite missionary enterprise, for Ezra purposed to set up in Jerusalem a system of teaching the returned captives the law of Moses, and thus place their rebuilt Jerusalem on a firm and abiding foundation. The law had been forgotten by many of the people and had been neglected by many more. There was great need that they should be taught both as to the text of God's requirements but also concerning their duty to observe them. Ezra, as a teacher, was first of all himself a doer as well as a student of the law.

##### II. EZRA'S PRECAUTION

Ezra 8: 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek

him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this; and he was intrusted of us.

Before leaving Ahava, Ezra proclaimed a fast among the people who were going with him to Jerusalem that they might entreat Jehovah to be with them and keep them from harm on their way. His caution in this respect was his best precautionary measure. He had the alternative of asking for a military escort from the king, but he was ashamed to do that because he had declared to the Persian ruler that his God would attend them on their expedition. So he must be sure that God will be with them, and wait until such assurance is given. It became necessary that his faith in the general providences of God should apply to a special case immediately at hand. The more we believe in God's goodness and mercy, the more anxious we are to get assurance of his blessing and care in any special emergency or need.

##### III. EZRA'S DESTINATION

Ezra 8: 31 Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

God's blessings attended the caravan of Ezra on the long four months' journey to Jerusalem. They escaped some who laid in wait for them to capture the great stores of money they carried, and gave them the victory over such robber bands as attacked them. So they reached Jerusalem safely, and then "abode there three days" before they disbanded as a company of travelers and began their duties as helpers to their brethren who had preceded them into the land of Judea. On arriving at their destination Ezra had the money checked up which had been placed in the hands of various bearers before leaving Ahava. It was found to correspond exactly with the memoranda as to the amounts entrusted to each of the trustees. There was no shortage anywhere.

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# Nehemiah Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem

LESSON PILOT: September 2 to September 8

## What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. What three movements for the rehabilitation of Jerusalem? (Mon.)
2. How was Nehemiah received in Judea? (Tues.)
3. Why Nehemiah inspected the ruined walls. (Wed.)
4. How the builders were equipped. (Thurs.)
5. Why Nehemiah rebuked some of the Jewish nobles. (Fri.)
6. How long was the wall in building? (Sat.)
7. When are people most grateful to God? (Sun.)

GOLDEN TEXT—*The people had a mind to work.* Nehemiah 4: 6.

## DAILY READINGS

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Read Nehemiah 2: 1-6.—NEHEMIAH'S SADNESS AND REQUEST  
"Why is thy countenance sad?"

There were three distinct movements for the rehabilitation of Jerusalem on the part of the Jews in Persia. The first was under an edict by Cyrus in 536 B.C. led by Zerubbabel, the primary purpose of which was the rebuilding of the temple which was completed and dedicated in 515 B.C. Fifty-seven years later, under proclamation of Xerxes Longimanus, Ezra led a movement into Judea for the purpose of educating the people there in the law of the Lord. This was followed, after thirteen years, by a commission from the same king to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The peace of Jerusalem could not be safeguarded as long as its walls were in ruins. Nehemiah felt keenly the importance of doing something about it. He was cup-bearer to his king and a trusted officer of the empire, much beloved by his ruler. His sadness over the situation in Jerusalem was apparent, though he tried to conceal it. But when he was asked by the king as to the cause of it, he unburdened his heart to his emperor.

*May we be in great distress because of the great needs of the Lord's cause in the world today.*

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## What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. Why the wall was built so rapidly. (I)
2. What is the basis of co-operation? (II)
3. Who tried to bluff Nehemiah? (II)
4. How Nehemiah met their threats. (II)
5. What was the position of the men on the wall? (III)
6. What precaution was taken in case of attack? (III)
7. Were the builders interrupted? (III)

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Read Nehemiah 2: 6-11.—NEHEMIAH'S RETURN TO JERUSALEM  
"So I came to Jerusalem."

This was not "Nehemiah's return to Jerusalem," as the title is stated by the committee selecting these passages, but it is the account of Nehemiah's first going to Jerusalem. He was of the "children of the captivity," but not among the captives taken from Jerusalem, even in the last deportation which took place 140 years before this. Ten years after the rebuilding of the wall, he went back to Persia, but returned to Jerusalem after two years, evidently according to his promise to Artaxerxes at the time permission was given him to go to Jerusalem. A military escort was given him, and letters were sent by him to the Persian satraps west of the Jordan to aid him in his work. But two of the Samaritan chieftains became angry when they found out that the Jews had received such powerful reinforcements. Even the city itself took no notice of his coming for three days.

*May we strive all the more to do good where appreciation is lacking.*

### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Read Nehemiah 2: 12-20.—INSPECTION OF THE WALL  
"I went out by night . . . and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down."

Although Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem was well known to the people of

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the city, he did not divulge his purpose at first until he had personally inspected the condition of the walls. In order that he might do so unobserved, he selected a few companions and went by night to make a complete survey. He did not wish to excite hostility on the part of the enemies to his project until he could get ready to meet it, and could not appear as the champion of a reform among the Jews until he knew fully what their needs were. Having completed his findings he made known to his brethren his purpose, calling their attention to "the distress we are in." He first got the cause on their hearts and then told them how God had put it into his heart to help them.

*May we get Christ's causes on our own hearts before we try to enlist others in the support of them.*

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Read Nehemiah 4: 15-23.—BUILDING UNDER DIFFICULTIES  
"The builders had every one his sword girded by his side."

The enemies of Nehemiah's project at first considered it a big joke and ridiculed it. But when half the wall had been rebuilt, they saw that the city would be fortified if they did not forcibly interfere with the builders. A conspiracy was formed among the Samaritan leaders to fight against them and put an end to the building. However, the conspiracy became known to Nehemiah who set armed men on guard against them. This frustrated their plans and the builders resumed work on the walls, but each taking the precaution to keep his sword at his side.

*That we enter not into temptation, may we both watch and pray.*

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Read Nehemiah 5: 14-19.—NEHEMIAH'S UNSELFISHNESS  
"I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor."

There were among the nobles and rulers of the Jews in Jerusalem men of wealth who had oppressed their brethren by excessive rates of interest on borrowed money and the foreclosure of mortgages which the borrowers were unable to pay off. There was a great deal of penuriousness and little frat-

ernity among them. He had not come to Jerusalem for pecuniary profit, and why should they make the holy city, itself destitute, a source of ill-gotten gains? To administer a suitable rebuke by way of contrasting their conduct with his own, Nehemiah reminds them that all the twelve years he had been engaged in the work in Jerusalem, he had not taken advantage even of the king's permission to use for himself the tribute money due the crown from that province. He had done this in order that the people in Judea might not be burdened with such taxes, although he was authorized to levy them for the purposes of his campaign.

*May we scorn any profit which is to be had through a public misfortune.*

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Read Nehemiah 6: 15 to 7: 4.—THE WALL COMPLETED  
"So the wall was finished."

After fifty-two days of working and watching, the builders under Nehemiah finished the wall on the 25th day of September, and on the first of October its completion was celebrated by a solemn assembly of all the congregation. Although the enemies of the project had been held back from forcible interference, they were much displeased to see the walls finished and the gates of the city on their hinges. Matters were somewhat complicated for Nehemiah because not a few of the nobles of the city had fraternal relations with Tobiah, one of the leaders against the movement, by reason of his marriage to one of the Jewish women and that of his son also to one of their number, doubtless a relative of some of the nobles. But Nehemiah would not admit of such fraternizing. He gave orders that the gates of the city should be shut at sundown and not opened till the "sun was hot." Further, he directed that everyone maintain a watch over his own house. He would not be intimidated by the threatening letters of Tobiah demanding recognition.

*May we ever strive to conserve the results of what we have done for our Lord, and not allow them to be unworthily employed.*

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## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Read Psalm 88: 1-7—THE FAVOR OF JEHOVAH  
"Thou hast brought back the captivity of Judah."

No doubt, this psalm was written at the time of the completion of the wall under Nehemiah. It is certainly post-exilic. Not only did Nehemiah's enemies perceive that the work of rebuilding the wall had been wrought of God, but the builders themselves so understood it. They knew they could never have accomplished such a task in so short a time, with such meager resources and against such powerful opposition, if God had not built it veritably with his own hands. Under such circumstances people are grateful and burst into songs of praise to God. And it is then also that the heart is tender and prays for the forgiveness of sin and a deeper revival in divine grace. When a people have passed through a period of sacrificial giving or service, they are ready for a spiritual revival.

*May we give God the glory for all we do, regardless of the hardships we endured in doing it.*

### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, September 8

Topic—Nehemiah Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem.  
THE LABORER LESSON—Nehemiah 2: 1 to 7: 4.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. THINKING TOGETHER

Nehemiah 4: 8 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

Without serious interference, the builders on the wall of Jerusalem had completed it half-way before the enemies of the project took much account of what was going on. The people "had a mind to work." They were all of one mind, and their hands were all of one hand. The result was that the walls began to go up almost as if by magic. Before people can be of one hand they must be of one mind. Co-operation is impossible without unity of spirit and purpose.

##### II. WORKING TOGETHER

Nehemiah 4: 15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

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16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.

18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

A conspiracy among the enemies to frustrate or scatter the builders on the wall by at least a show of violence became known to Nehemiah. So he set a watch against them, ready for armed resistance. Seeing this, the opponents backed off, since they did not care to lose any blood. If they could not bluff Nehemiah, they would call off and look menacingly on. But they were not to be trusted any more seriously than they were to be feared. Every man on the wall went on with his work, with his sword at his side.

##### III. STANDING TOGETHER

Nehemiah 4: 19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.

20 In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.

21 So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

Since the wall was being built simultaneously all around the city, the workmen on it were necessarily at some distance from each other. In order to afford one the protection of all, the trumpeter was directed to sound the alarm at any place where the enemy might attack the builders so that the workmen, with their swords already on them, might rush to the scene and prevent serious disaster. There was perfect organization among them, both for work and for service to their common cause. Some held spears while others used trowels. But all stood together. The result was what even they, as well as their enemies, considered a miracle of construction, the rebuilding of the wall entirely around the city of Jerusalem in fifty-two days.

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## Teaching the Law of God

LESSON PILOT: September 9 to September 15

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. How often Moses commanded that the law be read. (Mon.)
2. Circumstances under which Joshua read the law. (Tues.)
3. The occasion of Ezra's reading the law. (Wed.)
4. When does God's Word give joy? (Thurs.)
5. What was Jesus' sabbath custom? (Fri.)
6. What is the bulwark of the churches? (Sat.)
7. Who are they who love the Bible? (Sun.)

### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. What was Ezra asked to do? (I)
2. Who was present when he read the law? (I)
3. What was Ezra's task? (I)
4. What Ezra did on opening the book. (II)
5. What the people did on seeing it opened. (II)
6. The people's first emotions, and why. (III)
7. Their later feeling, and why. (III)

GOLDEN TEXT—The opening of thy words giveth light. Psalm 119: 130.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Read Deuteronomy 31: 9-13—READING THE LAW  
COMMANDED  
"Thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing."

In his farewell address to the Children of Israel, Moses, at the age of 120 years, gave specific directions concerning the law which he had written based on the Decalogue. The document which he gave into the hands of the Levites for keeping perhaps comprised the entire Pentateuch, or the first five books of our Bible. It certainly contained the laws as recorded in the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. He commanded that it should be read before all Israel every seventh year, the year of Jubilee, at the feast of Tabernacles, the closing festival of the year. It was to be the most important feature of the happiest of all their celebrations. The priests would, of course, read and study it continually, and perhaps teach it to many, but when the people came together on their Jubilee year all of them were to have the privilege of hearing it for themselves. From the very beginning the Word of God has not been the exclusive property of priests or ministers. A popular education in the Bible was the program for the government of God's people in the days of Moses.

*May we not only stand for an open Bible, but see to it that everybody can hear it.*

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Read Joshua 8: 30-35—JOSHUA READING THE LAW  
"There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before the congregation of Israel."

After Joshua had brought the Children of Israel into the Promised Land and immediately after the conquests of Jericho and Ai, he had the law read according to the command of Moses. An altar was erected in Mount Ebal, on which the people offered sacrifices and burnt offerings to Jehovah. An atmosphere of worship was necessary in order that the people might listen devotionally to the law. Whether the year of Jubilee had come or not, Joshua wanted the people to get first-hand knowledge of what God required of them before they went further into the conquest of Canaan. Already disaster had befallen them because Achan had transgressed. Everyone was commanded by Joshua to participate in the services and to respond, either to the blessings of the law from Mount Gerizim side or to the curses of the law from the side of Mount Ebal.

*May we go with a whole gospel to a whole world.*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Read Nehemiah 8: 1-6—EZRA READING THE LAW  
"Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women."

Something more was needed to protect Jerusalem than the walls which had been rebuilt by Nehemiah. Material defenses will crumble unless the moral

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characters of the people behind them are built up and maintained. The work of Ezra, the teacher, was needed to supplement that of Nehemiah, the builder. The old Jerusalem had been laid waste because the former inhabitants had neglected the law of God. What would be the use, therefore, to rebuild the city unless the inhabitants thereof would give attention to the law and thus avoid a repetition of the downfall? The people themselves had experienced a revival by reason of the building activities under Nehemiah, and, therefore, requested that the law be read before them. They wanted to know their duty in every particular. In response to their request, Ezra brought the law before the assembly gathered in the street which was before the water gate, "on the first day of the seventh month." It was, therefore, a special occasion, not being the time at which they were required to do this thing, which was during the feast of Tabernacles in the twelfth month of every seventh year. It was entirely voluntary on their part. Ezra was assisted by a group of select helpers who gave the sense of the reading to any who did not understand it.

*May we be especially active in giving the Word of God to people who are ready and anxious to receive it.*

#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Read Nehemiah 8: 1-12—REJOICING IN THE LAW  
 "All the people went their way . . . to make mirth because they had understood the words."

Nehemiah, the governor, was present when the law was read before the people, though he did not take an active part in the services which, from the nature of the case, were under the conduct of the priests and Levites, with Ezra as their leader. But when the people gave expression to their grief because of their shortcomings, in the light of the requirements as read in their hearing, the governor spoke with reassuring voice. He was glad to see the people weep for such a cause. It indicated a healthy spiritual condition on their part which, after all, was the occasion for great rejoicing instead of great lamentation. People ought never to be so happy as they are when they

are most sorry for their sins. So Nehemiah proclaimed the day to be one of rejoicing, and with the aid of Ezra and the Levites "stilled the people" and sent them away to celebrate the special jubilee. It was not to be a day of fasting but of feasting. Not only were they to eat and drink, but to "send portions unto them for whom nothing was prepared" so that the jubilate spirit might be everywhere. They at first wept because they perceived they had not kept the words of the law, but, as much as they needed to weep for that reason, they had much greater cause for joy in being permitted to understand them.

*May we thank God for the revelation of himself to us in words we can comprehend.*

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Read Luke 4: 16-21—JESUS READING THE LAW  
 "As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath."

Jesus was a regular attendant upon the services of the Jewish synagogue at Nazareth before he entered upon his ministry. And so, on his first visit to his home town after he began his public career, he observed his custom and took his place among the worshippers in the synagogue. The leader for the day, knowing of the growing fame of their young fellow townsman as a rabbi, or religious teacher, naturally accorded him special privileges as speaker for the occasion, and gave him the roll, or book, of Isaiah. Jesus read the first and second verses of the sixty-first chapter (as we subdivide the book), and gave the book to the minister without comment and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, all wondering why he read that selection, or why he did not go on with the reading, or why he made no comment. Pedagogically, it was a rhetorical pause on his part. But when the psychological moment came, he simply remarked, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." It was a declaration of his own divine Sonship which he then supported by arguments, but which they instantly rejected and in consequence of which they sought to do him violence.

*Like Jesus, may we make it our custom to read the Holy Scriptures regularly.*

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Read Deuteronomy 6: 1-9—TEACHING THE LAW AT HOME  
 "Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children."

Even before Moses gave the Israelites the command to read the law of God publicly and in open assembly, he directed that the commandments of Jehovah should be taught in their homes. In fact, all public worship is a sort of epitome of the private devotions of a people. Unless they read the Bible in their homes they are not going to be interested in a regular, systematic, popular study of it. And the bulwark of the church is the godly home. The surest guarantee of individual piety and prosperity is the right sort of instruction given to children by their parents around their fireside. The importance of this should come up for emphasis in these days. Home influences are not what they should be, all because the reading of the Bible in family devotions has about ceased. Both the modern parents and the children are at fault in this matter. To insist on such exercises a father is not infrequently considered puritanical or old foggy. And in many other instances parents are too much engaged with business or social duties to give a definite time each day to the religious training of their children at home.

*May God give us a revival of religion in the home.*

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Read Psalm 119: 97-104—LOVE FOR GOD'S LAW  
 "O how I love thy law."

Love is the spirit of obedience. All who love God want to do his will. They love his law because they love him. To set at naught his Word is to despise his authority and scorn his character. The singer enumerates the benefits of meditating on and knowing God's law. By means of it he is wiser than his enemies because they do not know it, do not, therefore, know as much of truth as he. He has more "understanding than his teachers" who might instruct him in other things, but whose igno-

rance of God's commandments makes them his inferiors in knowledge. Because he knows God's precepts, he is wiser than the ancients to whom less of revelation was made than was afforded him. Because he knew God's laws, he had kept himself in the paths of righteousness and safety, and from "every evil way."

*May we get the larger benefits of the better knowledge of God's Word.*

#### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, September 15

TOPIC—Teaching the Law of God.  
 THE LARGER LESSON—Nehemiah 8: 1-12.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. READING OF THE WORD

*Nehemiah 8: 1* And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

A great mixed assembly gathered at the street before the water gate in Jerusalem to hear Ezra read the law as commanded by Moses. Even the children who were old enough to understand were present. The hearing of the law was therefore an individual as well as a public matter. Each person was to understand it. All were anxious to hear it and did not therefore consider the service too long though it lasted from early morning till the middle of the day. Ezra's task was to read the law and see that every hearer understood what was read. He was not reading a liturgy. He was not reading to amaze the folk but to instruct them.

##### II. REVERENCE FOR THE WORD

*Nehemiah 8: 5* And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen,

Amen, with lifted up hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Ascending a pulpit of wood, Ezra opened the roll of the law before the people, invoking God's blessings upon the assembly as he did so. With due solemnity and reverence, the scribe himself opened the book. The people also answered him Amen and amen, lifting their hands and bowing their heads in the attitude and posture of worship. Before any one can hear God's word with an understanding ear there must be the spirit of worship in the heart.

### III. REACTIONS TO THE WORD

*Nehemiah 8:* So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

9 And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

## Malachi Foretells a New Day

LESSON PILOT: September 16 to September 22

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. Of what sins were the priests guilty? (Mon.)
2. What penalties were pronounced on them? (Tues.)
3. By whom was the priesthood to be purified? (Wed.)
4. How were the people to get right with God? (Thurs.)
5. Why the twofold effect of the Sun of righteousness? (Fri.)
6. When will the world be warless? (Sat.)
7. When will different people become alike? (Sun.)

**GOLDEN TEXT**—Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. Malachi 3: 1.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Read Malachi 1: 6-14—INSINCERE WORSHIP  
"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar."

Malachi prophesied at Jerusalem some thirty-two years after the second

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11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

Like good King Josiah who wept when he heard the law read after its discovery in the temple, the Jews by the water gate wept when they heard this same law read by Ezra and found out how remiss they had been. And besides, it quickened in them a sense of duty to God which softened them greatly and caused them to weep even though they had not been so disobedient. However, Nehemiah, the governor, who until then had not taken part in the services, directed that they should rejoice instead of weep, and should go away to celebrate the occasion by feasting rather than fasting. They should be glad because they had been caused to understand the law. They ought to be happy in the knowledge of it, for then they knew how to conduct themselves according to God's conditions for their happiness and welfare.

### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. Who was to come before the Lord in the new day? (I)
2. How long before the prophecy was fulfilled? (I)
3. The first work to be done in the new day. (I)
4. On whom is Jesus severe? (II)
5. How men rob God. (II)
6. What challenge God makes to the robbers? (III)
7. What promise to them if they will reform? (III)

visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem, beginning his ministry 400 B.C. His name means "my angel" or "my messenger," and because it is a title rather than a name, some have identified Malachi with Ezra and others with Mordecai, but both of these men were very old, even

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if living, at the time of Malachi's prophecy. Little is definitely known of him as a man. As a prophet he stood alone. His closest predecessors, Haggai and Zechariah, lived and prophesied 120 years before him. These prophets had urged the people to build the temple of Jehovah, while Malachi had to rebuke the men of his day for the abuse of it. The Jews had declined in their love for the law since the days of Ezra, and worship had become largely a matter of ritual devoid of devotion or spirituality. The priests offered polluted bread on God's altar, bread that had not been properly prepared, intimating that they thought "any old bread would do for God's altars!" Instead of bringing the firstlings of their flocks to sacrifice to God, they brought the lame and the blemished, that which could not be profitably disposed of in the markets.

Let us give the best we have to God in devout worship and service.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Read Malachi 2: 1-9—WICKED PRIESTS WARNED  
"O ye priests, this commandment is for you."

Malachi charged the priests with responsibility for the waywardness of the people. They had caused many to stumble at the law and had perverted the statutes of Jehovah by their own example. Like their illustrious predecessor, Ezra, they should have taught the words of God fully and carefully to everybody, but instead they had neglected to do so because of their own gross inconsistencies and sins. Men of impure lives dislike the Word of God, and will not be its messengers even though it be their business to declare it. Therefore, said Malachi, the priests were accursed. God would even "curse their blessings," as it has been said, "The Lord curses whom the Pope prays for." Perhaps nothing puts one further from God than the perversion of a sacred, God-given commission. There is no sin greater than sacrilege and hypocrisy. Down through the centuries prelates have "corrupted the covenant" and have twisted it before the people to suit the standards by which they are pleased to govern their own private lives.

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May our lives as well as our lips speak out for Christ.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Read Malachi 3: 1-6—PURIFICATION PROMISED  
"He shall purify the sons of Levi."

Without an exception, the prophets of the Old Testament were messengers of hope, although the burden of their prophecies lay in their denunciation of the sins of their times. Even when conditions were deplorable and most discouraging, the seer could look down the corridors of time and see a new day ahead. Sin to them was exceedingly abhorrent because their vision comprehended the higher and better condition to which God would surely lead his people. Malachi foresees the coming of the messenger who will prepare the way of the Lord who shall himself be the Messenger of the covenant. His conception of the Deliverer is necessarily that of a divine Purifier, one who will purge the priests, the sons of Levi, from the corrupt practices into which, in his own day, they had fallen. He is to be Judge. And judgment will begin "at the house of the Lord." Such judgment will discern and separate between the evil and the righteous, as the refiner of silver melts the ore in the crucible and takes the dross from the metal. He will be "a swift witness" against the evil doers and oppressors. This he will do in the midst of the chosen people, the descendants of Jacob, with whom, as a nation, he has ever been in covenant relations, and whom he has spared, not because they were worthy, but because he himself changes not.

May we realize that salvation is of the sovereignty as well as the grace of God.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Read Malachi 3: 7-12—BLESSINGS OF TITHING  
"Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts."

Not only were the priests guilty of offering "the lame and the sick" on the altars of Jehovah in Jerusalem but, as might be expected, the people themselves neglected to bring the tithe, as required by the Levitical law, for the support of the Lord's house. People who give God that which is of least value to them are

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certainly giving him less than he expects or deserves at their hands. Malachi therefore charged the Jews with having departed from God, and urged them to return to him. But, they argued, we have never left him, and how can we return to him? He then declared wherein they had departed from him and by what means they might get back to him. They had denied God his portion, and had therefore robbed him in withholding their tithes and offerings. The curse of Jehovah was upon them because the entire nation had been guilty of stealing from God. Nevertheless, the prophet throws out the challenge from Jehovah that if they would desist from their waywardness and bring their tithes into the storehouse so that there might be plenty for the support of the temple treasury unto the honor of God, the windows of heaven would be opened to them and blessings would descend upon them until they would not have room to contain them.

*May we give God his tithe in joyous recognition of his blessings upon us.*

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Read Malachi 4: 1-6—THE END OF THE WICKED  
"All that do wickedly shall be as stubble."

Malachi does not affirm that the Jews will be saved because they are of the seed of Abraham. All who do wickedly, whether of Israel or not, will pass away as chaff or stubble is burnt to make room for something better. In the new day ahead, the wicked will be weeded out, and the unprofitable servant will be cast into the outer darkness. But the coming of the Son of righteousness will be health to the righteous as well as judgment on the ungodly. The sun that invigorates the plant that is rooted in a good soil withers another that lies out on dry ground. By the same judgment of a holy God, one prospers and another fails. The righteous shall "inherit the earth." They shall "tread down the wicked," and be vindicated above all opposition and adversity. Malachi predicts the coming of the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," which will be heralded by a second Elijah the prophet who, as we know, was John the Baptist who "should go be-

fore him in the spirit and power of Elijah."

*May the gospel be to us "the savor of life unto life instead of death unto death."*

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Read Isaiah 2: 1-4—A WARLESS WORLD  
"They shall beat their swords into ploughshares."

In introducing this prophecy, Isaiah mentions the fact that it is "a word which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." It was a condition which would exist in the "last days." It was a vision therefore which stretched beyond the duration of Judah's political history but viewed its spiritual ascendancy. Jerusalem was more of a figure in the vision than a fact. It was typical of the seat and authority of Jehovah's government in the world. Through the agencies of his chosen, spiritual children, God's kingdom would be established in the whole earth. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel were not everlasting, but beyond them lay out the empire of God and the reign of Jesus Christ. The prophet foresaw universal peace through the supremacy of divine power when the word of God would become international law and Christ himself would be the chief Justice of the supreme court of the world. Then the weapons of war would be turned into implements of peace.

*May we strive for a warless world through the reign of the Prince of Peace.*

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Read Isaiah 11: 1-9—THE AGE OF PEACE  
"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

In his Messianic inspiration, Isaiah foresaw the decay of the house of David but that from its roots there would spring up a Branch who would be a spiritual sovereign and on whom the "spirit of wisdom and understanding" would rest. He predicted the Messiah would be the son of David but the scion of a defunct kingdom. He therefore could not have referred to a temporal king, and could not have had reference here to any period in the Messiah's kingdom short of its consummation. Although Judah had passed away, the

house of David would not fall because it would find its new and enduring life in the empire of the divine Branch. And under the sway of his acceptor, old animosities would be wiped out. Natural appetites and natures changed, so that "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb," and the lion, having lost his carnivorous desires, "shall eat straw like an ox." But people of divergent tastes and racial differences will be brought into fellowship only when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

*May we view afar the glorious reign of Christ and labor for its speedy consummation.*

### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, September 22

Text—Malachi Foretells a New Day.  
THE LAMBS' LUNCHEON—Malachi 1: 1 to 4: 6.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. THE NEW DAY MESSENGER

Malachi 3: 1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

In his prophecy of a new day for God's people, Malachi predicts, as did Isaiah, the coming of a messenger who will announce the appearance of the Messenger of the covenant by whom the new day will be set up. About 400 years afterwards, his prophecy was fulfilled in the coming of John the Baptist as the herald of Jesus Christ. The Messenger is identified with Jehovah who will "suddenly come to his temple." He will come with cleansing power to purge the temple of its impurities, as Jesus twice cleansed the Temple during his ministry. But more especially, he will

purge out the dross of sin from the hearts of men, and purify their souls by his grace and power.

##### II. THE NEW DAY JUDGMENTS

Malachi 3: 5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

But the Messenger of the new day will not give any quarter to wrongdoers. He is the enemy of the oppressor, adulterer and false swearer. All who have turned away from his ordinances and have not kept them will be severely reckoned with. He is going to be hard on those who knew and did not the will of God. Those who have robbed and cheated God by withholding what was due him at their hands will be treated as thieves. Jesus Christ is a swift witness against all evildoers.

##### III. THE NEW DAY OPPORTUNITIES

Malachi 3: 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.

God's grace is boundless and endless. He gives chance after chance for all who have wronged him to turn to him, and receive his unconditional pardon and blessing. Even those who have robbed him are challenged to bring their tithes and offerings into his storehouse so that he may open the windows of heaven to them.



## Significance of the Exile and the Restoration

LESSON PILOT: September 23 to September 29

### What to Find in the Daily Readings:

1. For whom did Ezekiel foresee the restoration? (Mon.)
2. The occasion of Daniel's prayer of confession. (Tues.)
3. What gave Joshua courage? (Wed.)
4. When did Jeremiah predict the seventy years' captivity? (Thurs.)
5. Who figured in rebuilding the temple? (Fri.)
6. Who loves the Bible? (Sat.)
7. The grounds of confidence in God. (Sun.)

**GOLDEN TEXT**—*The lovingkindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, And his righteousness unto children's children.*  
Psalm 103: 17.

### DAILY READINGS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Read Ezekiel 11: 14-25—**EZEKIEL'S VISION OF THE RESTORATION**  
"I will give you the land of Israel."

In one of his most despondent moments, on the occasion of the death of Pelatiah, one of Ezekiel's companions, the prophet lamented whether God would "make a full end of the remnant of Israel." Then the word of God came to him in positive assurance that although Jehovah had scattered his people among the countries, yet he would bring back a remnant to possess the land of their fathers. But his promise was to such only as would keep his covenant while in their distress, and to whom he would give a new spirit and a new heart. There can be no restoration without a regeneration. There was no promise to those Jews in captivity "whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things" but their own way would be recompensed on their heads. Scenes of the glory of God accompanied the vision, thus sealing as authoritative the word from God which Ezekiel had received and which he at once proclaimed to the captive Jews in Chaldea.

*When our hearts are heaviest, may it be that we shall receive hope's brightest light.*

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### What to Find in the Lesson Study:

1. What two great prophets of the exile? (I)
2. The chief characteristics of each. (II)
3. The three great leaders in the restoration. (II)
4. The work of each. (II)
5. The different reforms which each represent. (II)
6. The condition of Jerusalem in Malachi's day. (III)
7. In whom did Malachi foresee the coming of a new day? (III)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Read Daniel 9: 1-10—**DANIEL A MAN OF PRAYER**  
"I set my face unto the Lord God."

Daniel was an old man now. The seventy years predicted for the duration of the captivity were ended but the decree for the release of the captives was not yet issued. Although Daniel was himself a prophet to whom God spoke directly, yet he had occasion to look into the books or writings of the prophets before him, and did not consider it beneath his own station to do so. It seems that on the first year of the reign of Darius, Daniel refreshed his memory concerning the prophecy made by Jeremiah that "the desolations of Jerusalem" would last seventy years. He then gave himself to earnest prayer pleading for the forgiveness of sins and the mercies of God toward his people. He did not suppose that God had forgotten his promise, and yet he felt the need of bringing himself and his cause before God in timely entreaty.

*May God give us a deeper and more sincere prayer life.*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Read Joshua 1: 1-9—**THE VALUE OF COURAGE**  
"Be strong and of a good courage."

After the death of Moses, God spoke directly to Joshua who had been divinely selected as the leader of the Israel-

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ites in the conquest of the promised land. It was a great task. Powerful tribes occupied the country. To rout them would require great courage and faith in God. But since God had promised to give them the land, Joshua could be brave as long as he kept that promise before him and maintained his faith in the divine Promiser.

*In that which Christ has commanded us, may we ever remember that he has promised to be with us.*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Read Jeremiah 29: 10-14—**THE RESTORATION PROMISE**  
"After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you."

This prophecy was uttered by Jeremiah perhaps soon after the fall of Jehoiakim and the deportation of princes to Babylon. So at the outset he predicts that the captivity will last seventy years. Whether that was much comfort to the people at the time or not, it was at least assurance that there would be an end of the afflictions to which they would be reduced. By their distress and dispersion they would be brought nearer to God, and after they shall have returned to him they would be brought back to Jerusalem. God meant to do them good and not evil, even in sending them captives into foreign lands to weep and lament the downfall of their own country. It would take seventy years of sorrow to bring them to seek God aright. Jehovah had not forsaken them but they had forsaken him. But when they should draw nigh to him, he would draw nigh to them.

*How blessed is the disaster which brings us closer to God!*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Read Ezra 6: 13-15—**THE TEMPLE RESULT**  
"The elders of the Jews builded."

During the period of twenty years in which the second temple in Jerusalem was erected, several agencies and conditions were involved. For about two years of this time, nothing was done because of the restraining order which had been imposed on the builders through the instrumentality of hostile Samaritan chieftains in Judea. But under king Darius, work was resumed, al-

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though perhaps the king had much less to do with the resumption of the work than had the prophets Haggai and Zechariah whose stirring appeals inspired the Jews to renewed interest and activity in the enterprise. Then, among the Persian monarchs who had something to do with the project were Cyrus, who first issued the decree to Zerubbabel to return to Jerusalem and build the house of the Lord there; then Artaxerxes, "Pseudo-Smerdis," a usurper, whose reign was two years, and Darius, in the sixth year of whose reign the temple was finished and dedicated. And at the dedication, the services and "courses" of the Levites were conducted according to the directions in the code of Moses, for the first time in nearly a hundred years.

*May we persevere in every labor for our Lord, knowing we shall "reap if we faint not."*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Read Psalm 19: 7-14—**THE EXCELLENCY OF THE LAW**  
"More to be desired are they than gold."

What blessings have attended those who have loved the laws of the Lord! The Bible is the most precious possession of mankind. It is the property of all men. Its teachings are universally true, because the Word is itself truth. All who love righteousness delight in its precepts, and to them it is more precious than gold and sweeter than honey. It reveals the truth about oneself in two ways, the dangers to which one is exposed in life and the hidden faults that lie concealed in his own nature. In the observance of its warnings, one is kept "back from presumptuous sins." And under its enlightening influences, the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts are acceptable to God.

*May the Bible become more and more precious to us as we grow in the knowledge of it and receive its larger benefits.*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Read Psalm 61—**CONFIDENCE IN GOD**  
"Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

With the singer, how often have we felt the need of a strength greater than

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our own, and have longed for a refuge that overtops our own stature! When our hearts are overwhelmed, we are not sufficient for these things, and cry to God to pilot us into the harbor and to lead us to the rock where the storms can not harm us, nor make us afraid. Since God has sheltered us, we may trust him again and again. Since he has heard us we may be confident that he will do so again. He is unchangeable. David believed that he would "abide before God for ever" and that his "years would be as many generations." Indeed, his kingdom did not cease with the downfall of Judah, but was perpetuated in that of his Greater Son, the spiritual kingdom of heaven on earth.

*May our hearts ever trust in God and be calm and happy in such a faith.*

### LESSON STUDY

Sunday, September 29

Topic—Significance of the Exile and the Restoration.

#### Lesson Text and Comment

##### I. THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

(Golden Texts of Lessons 1 to 6.)

1. As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Ezekiel 33: 11.
2. Each one of us shall give account of himself to God. Romans 14: 12.
3. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end. Isaiah 9: 7.
4. They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. Daniel 12: 3.
5. Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot. Ephesians 5: 18.
6. The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psalm 34: 7.

The two outstanding characters of the exile were Ezekiel and Daniel: Ezekiel's ministry coming on in the early part of the captivity and Daniel's toward the close of it. Daniel's life, however, is the only one that spans the entire seventy-year period. The burden of Ezekiel's message was that of personal responsibility on the part of every man and of hope for the final happy outcome of the captivity under the overruling providence of God. The two great characteristics of Daniel were his devo-

tion to Jehovah and his courage under malicious abuse, with a prayer life unexcelled and with habits of sobriety unparalleled.

##### II. THE JEWISH RESTORATION

(Golden Texts of Lessons 7 to 11.)

7. Jehovah hath done great things for us, Whereof we are glad. Psalm 126: 3.
8. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah. Psalm 122: 1.
9. The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good. Ezra 8: 22.
10. The people had a mind to work. Nehemiah 4: 6.
11. The opening of thy words giveth light. Psalm 119: 130.

The three great characters of the Restoration period were Zerubbabel who was commissioned by Cyrus to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem; Ezra who was authorized by Artaxerxes Longimanus to go to Jerusalem and assist in the rehabilitation of the Jewish state, teaching the law of Moses to the people; and Nehemiah who led the people in the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem, with the aid of the Persian treasury, or tribute raised west of the Jordan river, but against great opposition at the hands of half-breed Jews who enviously looked on the restoration or agencies of reform; one is the church (Zerubbabel), another the Christian school (Ezra), and the other is righteous legislation (Nehemiah).

##### III. THE CHRISTIAN ERA

(Golden Text of Lesson 12.)

12. Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. Malachi 3: 1.

Malachi lived and prophesied at the time when the Restoration itself needed to be restored, when the priests and the people in Judea had departed from the law which Ezra had read to them, and had corrupted the temple which Zerubbabel had built for them. For centuries the chosen people had been blessed, chastened and disciplined, but in the end had failed. Malachi now foresees the coming of a new day in which the Lord himself will come to earth and set up a kingdom that will not fail, and says that the messenger of that day will in due time appear.

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